

Frente a la arremetida imperialista, **CUBA VENCERÁ**

STRUGGLE ★ **LA LUCHA**
for Socialism | por el Socialismo

Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Vol. 8, No. 2 • Jan 27, 2025

Suggested donation: \$1

Socialist Unity Party

Partido de Socialismo Unido

STOP funding wars – FUND CLIMATE ACTION

By Scott Scheffer

Unprecedented twin infernos have devastated Los Angeles, with Pacific Palisades and Altadena bearing the brunt. The blazes - the city's most destructive ever - have claimed 27 lives, left dozens missing, and turned 12,000 homes to ash. Early damage estimates stretch into the hundreds of billions. As of January 18, the full toll remains unclear.

A 2024 Yale study projects that the death toll, counting indirect deaths mostly from smoke inhalation, will be in the thousands. The study draws data from California wildfires over a period of 11 years up to and including the deadly 2018 Camp Fire that burned down the town of Paradise, Calif. Researchers say that 12,000 people likely died prematurely from smoke from that fire alone.

Pacific Palisades – a neighborhood on the stunning hillsides of the Santa Monica mountains – is reputed to be reserved for the fabulously rich. That is only half the truth. Among the ashes are the remains of five mobile home parks.

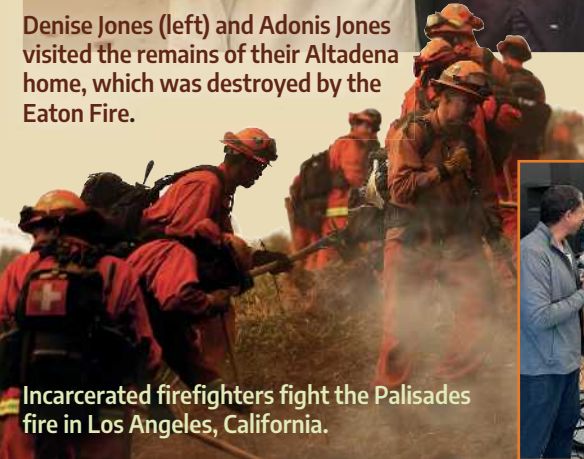
One of them would be considered the Beverly Hills of mobile home parks. But the other four are the residences of people who moved

Continued on page 22



Denise Jones (left) and Adonis Jones visited the remains of their Altadena home, which was destroyed by the Eaton Fire.

Below, building air purifiers in the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice.



Incarcerated firefighters fight the Palisades fire in Los Angeles, California.



At Trump's coronation, thousands vow to fight billionaire oligarchy

- ▶ Democrats capitulate on anti-immigrant bill
- ▶ Senate confirms warmonger Rubio ▶ Oligarchy already rules
- ▶ Trump's annexation redux ▶ Reversal of hard-won rights
- ▶ From David Duke to Musk's Nazi salute
- ▶ Gov. Landry kidnaps unhoused ahead of Super Bowl
- ▶ Tik Tok, Deepseek and Chinese technology

CUBA will win in the face of the imperialist onslaught!

Harriet Tubman Center of LA issues 10 demands

Money & support for fire victims and the people of Los Angeles, not war and genocide

Fires continue to rage; it is key that every possible effort, both local and national, is undertaken to STOP the fires. If the government can spend billions on wars abroad and genocide in Palestine, then it is urgent to turn our priorities around.

We demand of local, state & federal officials:

- 1. Stop landlord looting** and end price gouging. Rollback rents now!
- 2. Provide emergency housing** and compensation for all. We need a rent and mortgage rollback across the Los Angeles region and an eviction moratorium. Provide 0% interest loans to workers, the poor, and small businesses to rebuild, and provide equal relief for renters who often have no insurance.
- 3. Workers and people's take-over of the greedy insurance companies.** The insurance industry must pay up! No increase in rates.
- 4. Reject racist and white supremacist policies.** End disparities between Black, Brown, and poor communities with wealthy communities: Equal attention to historic Black communities like Altadena, California. Enact preventative measures such as converting to underground electrical power lines, fireproofing homes, and rentals in all neighborhoods, not just the wealthy.
- 5. Convert military production from bombs and guns to air purifiers and PPE.** Protect the health and lives in the Los Angeles region. Prioritize distribution to Black and Brown communities, families with children, seniors, and health challenges, and the broader poor community.
- 6. Restore cuts and expand funding for firefighting capabilities** in the region. Levy a special tax on the banks, billionaires, and big businesses, including PG&E and the insurance industry in California, to expand services.
- 7. Suspend and halt ICE raids.** People need food and shelter, not repression.
- 8. Pay prisoners union wages** and guarantee a path to employment in the fire department after incarceration. Presently, over 900 prisoners are risking their lives fighting fires. They are paid as little as \$5.80 a day.
- 9. Elected "Workers and Peoples Commission"** to guarantee preventative measures. This commission will be mandated to hold town halls and assemblies in neighborhoods and regions to hear people's suggestions and grievances. It will have the power to call on scientific expertise and to implement changes.
- 10. End the root cause of these catastrophes – capitalist climate crisis** – by stopping the big oil companies, the Pentagon, and the capitalist profiteers who have created this crisis. #



The Harriet Tubman Center hosts the group resistcarebloc to build air purifiers for the community while the government leaves victims to fend for themselves.

Struggle-La Lucha

Subscribe
and/or
donate



www.struggle-la-lucha.org
facebook.com/strugglelalucha
twitter.com/StruggleLaLucha
info@struggle-la-lucha.com

CONTACT STRUGGLE-LA LUCHA

ATLANTA
Atlanta@struggle-la-lucha.org
BALTIMORE
Baltimore@struggle-la-lucha.org
BOONVILLE, INDIANA
Boonville@struggle-la-lucha.org
BOSTON
Boston@struggle-la-lucha.org
DENVER
Denver@struggle-la-lucha.org
DETROIT
Detroit@struggle-la-lucha.org

LOS ANGELES
LA@struggle-la-lucha.org
NEW ORLEANS
NOLA@struggle-la-lucha.org
NEW YORK CITY
NYC@struggle-la-lucha.org
ORLANDO, FLORIDA
Orlando@struggle-la-lucha.org
SAN DIEGO
SanDiego@struggle-la-lucha.org
WASHINGTON, D.C.
DC@struggle-la-lucha.org

Racism and exploitation: Incarcerated firefighters and a burning city

By Lev Koufax

The State of California boasts one of the highest minimum wages in the country at \$16.50 an hour unless you're a prisoner. The reality of pay beneath minimum wage is no different for the hundreds of incarcerated workers in California who have been pressed into service to combat the most destructive fires in Los Angeles County history. The fact that a measly \$16.50 still manages to be one of the best minimum wages in the 50 states is a topic for another day.

Since a series of fires have rolled through northwestern Los Angeles, including the Palisades and Eaton fires, local and state authorities have struggled to contain the blaze as it advances towards the more densely populated city proper. In this desperation, the California Department of Corrections deployed over 900 incarcerated firefighters to the front line against the deadly wildfires.

These incarcerated workers make a minimum of \$5.80 and a maximum of \$10.24 a day. Needless to say, an incarcerated firefighter's "day" is unlikely to be a standard eight-hour day. It is entirely common for firefighters to work 24-hour shifts.

Prison labor is used widely across the United States. Incarcerated workers produce roughly \$9 billion in services and \$2 billion in goods per year for an absolute pittance. There is nowhere in the country where incarcerated workers are entitled to minimum wage. This is all allowed under an exception to the 13th Amendment prohibition on slavery.

The LA fires have brought this issue back into the spotlight as hundreds of prisoners risk their lives for dollars a day performing menial and grueling work. According to The Marshall Project, incarcerated firefighters generally work on "hand crews" using hand tools to clear vegetation and dig trenches to slow the spread of wildfires. The operation of fire hoses or the spreading of flame retardants is left to the professional firefighters, all while prison laborers swelter and struggle in the dirt.

The entire capitalist system is predicated on underpaying workers to maximize the ruling class's profits. This principle applies to workers in the public and pri-



Incarcerated firefighters fight the Palisades fire on 10 January in Los Angeles, California.

vate sectors. The ruling class is fanatically committed to as little state investment as possible in programs that benefit the general welfare and as much as possible in corporate tax breaks and militarized police forces. For this reason, incarcerated workers generally comprise 30% of California's firefighting force.

The job of a firefighter is an essential part of society. This job should be a public service that is equally funded, with workers fairly compensated and provided with health care. Not only do firefighters risk their lives to immediate danger without a question, they are also exposed to invisible toxic chemicals that burn from the industrial waste capitalism produces. Incarcerated firefighters have no health care. Cancer is the leading cause of death for firefighters more generally.

In addition to the class oppression inherent in prison slave labor, the Los Angeles firefighting crisis highlights the racism at the heart of U.S. capitalism. Black and Latino people, mostly men, comprise 71% of California's prison population, but only 55% of the overall population. Only 5% of California's population is Black according to the 2020 U.S. Census; however, almost 30% of California's prisoners are Black. So when these prisoners are ordered into the field to dig a ditch ahead of an advancing fire, the chances are those are Black and Brown people facing hyper-exploitation and the hardest of labor – as is so often the case in this country.

Progressive Twitch Streamer Hassan Piker conducted an unfiltered interview with incarcerated firefighters on Jan. 11, as the fires burned high. "It's way better because if I was in the prison yard, I'm seeing guys get stabbed, get beat up, the cops treat us like shit, but here we get

better treatment," he said. "They talk to us like humans. We got a job. We're underpaid, but we have a job. And then the community shows us all kinds of love. We never received that growing up."

The irony of these men and women who receive this training is that once they are released from prison,

it is rare that they get hired as full-time firefighters due to their status as formerly incarcerated people. This country needs more firefighters, and they should be fairly compensated, not exploited.

During the LA fires, the billionaire former Republican mayoral candidate Rick Caruso hired privately contracted firefighters to protect his shopping mall in the Palisades. The mall, a prominent symbol of capitalism, remains relatively untouched. Meanwhile, the neighborhoods and schools in the surrounding area were consumed in flames. Caruso and other LA capitalists defend their choice to protect the mall where Angelinos work and congregate.

One central danger in this situation is a greater reliance on private contractors for the proliferation of public services and spaces. As public services are privatized, the quality of the service often plummets as profit takes the driver's seat. One can simply look to the aftermath of Texas's or Puerto Rico's privatized power grid as examples of the utter chaos ushered in by privatization.

The destruction and subsequent exploitation created by these fires provide strong arguments against capitalism. As long as an ultra-wealthy few direct the affairs of the U.S. working class, macabre scenarios akin to the incarcerated firefighters deployed around Los Angeles will continue to manifest.

For all these reasons, the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles is demanding a full people's program to confront the fires, including a clear path to permanent employment for incarcerated firefighters and strong unions for all workers combating these fires.

Please see the Harriet Tubman Center's full program on page 2. #

Protest Trump's coronation,

By Jace Carter

Washington, D.C., Jan. 20 – Despite below-freezing temperatures and strong winds, a thousand or more people took to the streets today during President Donald Trump's inauguration to demonstrate that the movement for Palestine and for workers' and migrants' rights isn't going anywhere just because the oligarchy-supporting fascist has now taken back the Oval Office for a second term. In fact, our united struggle for liberation will only continue to intensify against Trump's plans to enact his far-right billionaire agenda against the working class fully.

That agenda includes but is not limited to: mass deportations of migrant workers, severe repression of unions' rights, LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, and the student intifada, and more reckless spending for the U.S. war machine to further its aggression against the Axis of Resistance in the Middle East, against China and Latin America, and in Ukraine through the U.S.-NATO proxy war against Russia.

The action was organized by the We Fight Back Network, a coalition of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, the Palestinian Youth Movement, Maryland 2 Palestine, and Anakbayan DC, with dozens of other endorsing organizations including the Peoples Power Assembly and Struggle-La Lucha who were well represented in the streets.

People gathered at Malcolm X Park, a very fitting location for MLK Day, symbolic of the continuous struggle for justice once led by these well-known revolutionaries, all while our fascist government once again used this day to try to reduce both men's legacies, pushing the myth of their opposition to each other. We know that they both knew that extreme poverty and racism in this country are directly linked to capitalism and militarism. They both also knew that the only way to end these material conditions is for all oppressed workers to unite together and fight back against the ruling class.

During the rally, it was announced that Indigenous revolutionary and political prisoner Leonard Peltier, who was wrongfully incarcerated over 50 years ago for the murder of two FBI agents, had finally been granted executive clemen-



cy in one of President Biden's final acts before leaving office. This surprise announcement brought immense joy and relief to an already fired-up crowd ready to take to the streets.

People marched down 16th Street past various embassies and luxury apartments, much to the disgust of a few Trump supporters straining their necks to make their obnoxious voices heard amongst the roar of those chanting "No Trump, No KKK, No fascist USA!" "The people, united, will never be defeated!" and "There is only one solution, intifada, revolution!" to name a few.

While both the MPD and U.S. Park Police encroached on the marching crowd with their bicycles on the sidewalks, other onlookers watched from either their balconies or on the sidewalks, taking plenty of photos and videos. A notable feature that stood out against the various signs and protest art held by the crowd was a large makeshift guillotine smeared in fake blood with a sign underneath that read "COME GET SUM!" an obvious jab at the billionaire oligarchy set to rule during Trump's second presidency, inspiring the need for revolution against the ruling class.

The march then turned onto Massachusetts Avenue before stopping at the Philippine Embassy, where members of Malaya DC and Anakbayan DC held another brief but energetic rally, which denounced the economic and militaristic relationship between both Trump and President Marcos Jr.'s governments. "We will see that

[President Ferdinand] Marcos Jr. will continue to intensify militarization in the Philippines," said Norynne Caleja of Malaya DC. "We will continue to see the United States bring forth funding for aerial bombings in our peasant communities, in our Indigenous lands."

The march continued down Massachusetts Avenue before ending at Dupont Circle, where the final and perhaps most spirited rally was held. Speakers emphasized the importance of continuing to organize and build alternative structures outside of the capitalist, imperialist system that has worked exactly as intended: to press the boot further onto the necks of the working class through starvation wages, lack of affordable housing, union-busting, piss-poor education and health care, and insanely high grocery prices.

The struggle for a better future for all is a commitment we must continue to make, and, seeing as we are no strangers to what repression against our movement has looked like under a Biden administration, we must not retreat when the right-wing extremists under Trump launch their all-out assault against us!

We must revive the fighting spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as well as all the great revolutionaries who precede us, as it is only through the power of the people that we will put an end to this seemingly endless nightmare of capitalism! Long live Palestine! Long live Lebanon! Long live the struggle for liberation! Long live international solidarity! The people will continue to fight back! #

fight billionaire oligarchy



SLL photos

'I've been to the mountaintop' A call to action then and now

By Penny Pinotti

On Jan. 11, members of the Baltimore community gathered at the Harriet Tubman Solidarity Center for a screening of “At the River I Stand,” a film documenting the Memphis sanitation workers strike in 1968. The working class civil rights struggles intertwined in this strike drew Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Poor People’s Campaign to Memphis. Just two months later, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

Memphis sanitation workers at the time were predominantly Black, working long hours in dangerous conditions, compensated with wages so low that workers qualified for welfare. Working conditions are described in the film as a plantation mentality, with Black workers under-compensated while toiling in inhumane conditions, all under the oversight of racist government officials and supervisors.

After two garbage collectors, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were crushed to death by a garbage compactor, 1,300 Black sanitation workers went on strike. Workers demanded recognition of their union, safer working conditions, and fair wages.

Members of the community engaged in a boycott and supported the strike, and a sit-in of sanitation workers and supporters pressured the City Council into voting to recognize the union and increase wages.

‘I am a man’

However, Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb rejected this resolution. The strike and daily marches continued, and the now famous anti-racist slogan, “I am a man,” developed.

In March, Mayor Loeb called for martial law and brought in 4,000 National Guard troops to patrol the streets after police escalated the non-violent protest into essentially a police riot. Dr. King Jr. returned on April 3 and delivered his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech to sanitation workers.

The next day, he was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. The sanitation workers strike concluded on April 16 when the City Council agreed to union recognition and increased wages for the sanitation workers.

Baltimore sanitation workers

Although the film depicts struggles that took place 57 years ago, the is-

ssues in the film are strikingly similar to issues faced today. Two sanitation workers in Baltimore City were killed in 2024 due to unsafe working conditions: Ronald Silver II died at work in August due to heatstroke and Timothy Cartwell was crushed to death by the garbage collection truck on which he worked in November.

Their deaths are directly connected to the gross negligence and inadequate working conditions of the Department of Public Works. Their deaths could have, and should have, been avoided with proper safety training and regulations to protect workers in extreme weather.

It is necessary for the Baltimore City Council to improve the safety conditions of workers. Much like the community in Memphis in 1968, the Baltimore community needs to rally around sanitation workers to pressure the Baltimore City Council to act.

As pointed out by community members who attended the film screening, Dr. King Jr. fought for worker power and against racism, not some broad ideal of “freedom” as often is asserted in the mainstream press. To honor his legacy, community members in Baltimore

Continued on page 8

Senate Democrats capitulate to

By Stephen Millies

Thirty-three Democratic Senators – led by Charles Schumer – voted on Jan. 9 to push along the anti-immigrant Laken Riley Act, virtually guaranteeing its eventual passage. This legislation will allow the deportation of immigrants, including children, who are merely charged – not convicted – of shoplifting and other minor offenses.

Whatever happened to the “presumption of innocence”? Weren’t we told in grade school that defendants in the United States were considered innocent until proven guilty?

The bill is demagogically named after Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student in Athens, Georgia, who was killed last year while jogging. José Antonio Ibarra, an immigrant from Venezuela, was convicted of killing Riley.

Bigots in Congress and on Fox News are cynically using this tragedy to smear millions of immigrants as dangerous criminals. It’s no different than saying if a Black, Latinx, Muslim, Jewish, or transgender person was guilty of a crime, then all of “them” should be punished.

Georgia politician Mike Collins sponsored this hate legislation in the House of Representatives. He had earlier introduced his self-named RAZOR Act to allow Texas to string concertina wire in the Rio Grande so migrant children and their families could be cut to shreds.

The NAACP has demanded Collins be investigated. He praised white fraternity students at the University of Mississippi who racially taunted and made ape-like gestures towards a Black woman who was protesting the genocide of Palestinians.

One of the loudest congressional backers of the Laken Riley Act is Collins’ fellow Georgian, Marjorie Taylor Greene. This nutjob claimed that the 2018 California forest fires were caused by space lasers, including those allegedly manipulated by Jewish people.

Both Collins and Greene were silent when another jogger, the 25-year-old Black man Ahmaud Arbery, was murdered in 2020 while jogging near Brunswick, Georgia. The local district attorney



advised that no arrests be made. It took people mobilizing in Georgia and across the country that Arbery’s killers were brought to trial and convicted.

To mock the Black Lives Matter movement, Greene wears a t-shirt emblazoned “Say Her Name: Laken Riley.” Tens of thousands of people wore t-shirts saying, “Say Her Name: Breonna Taylor,” in memory of the Black woman who was killed in 2020 by Louisville, Kentucky, police.

Greene hates the Black Lives Matter movement and compares it to the Ku Klux Klan.

Cowardly retreat before Trump

Last year, Senate Democrats stopped this legislation using the Senate’s filibuster rule, which requires the approval of 60 senators before a bill can be voted on. But following Trump’s narrow victory, the vast majority of Democratic senators are jumping on the anti-immigrant train.

Only eight Democrats and independent Bernie Sanders refused to go along.

Democratic Senators John Fetterman from Pennsylvania and Rubén Gallego from Arizona are among the sponsors of the Laken Riley Act.

These politicians are not only craven but also shortsighted. In a country of 340 million people, Trump won by less than 2.3 million votes. Just the drop-off in Democratic votes in California – 1.8 million – accounted for most of that.

Trump’s nutty and dangerous cabinet picks are already provoking derision. So are his schemes to invade Greenland, Panama, Mexico, Canada, and maybe – with his sidekick Elon Musk – Mars.

The 33 Senate Democrats allowing this

anti-immigrant bill to proceed are like those who supported the Iraq war over 20 years ago. Half of the Democratic Senators – including Joe Biden, Charles Schumer, John Kerry, and Hillary Clinton – voted for the 2002 resolution to allow George W. Bush to wage his bloody war.

Kerry’s vote didn’t do him any good when he ran for president in 2004. Neither did it help Clinton in 2016.

Echoes of Dred Scott

In its notorious 1857 Dred Scott decision, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Black people had no rights that white people need to respect. The Laken Riley Act tells cops and judges that immigrants have no rights at all.

Any bigot with a badge will be able to racially profile someone who they think “looks funny” and claim they stole a candy bar. In some states, a person can be accused of shoplifting without even attempting to leave a store.

That’s what happened to Frank Wills, the Black security guard who caught Richard Nixon’s Watergate burglars on June 17, 1972. In 1979, Wills was accused of hiding a pair of sneakers in a bag. South Carolina authorities jailed the Watergate hero in revenge for helping to drive Nixon out of the White House.

The congressional steamroller to pass the Laken Riley Act goes hand-in-hand with Trump’s vow to take away citizenship from children born in the United States whose parents are immigrants.

Trump’s proposed action – which he promises to accomplish by executive order – would repeal the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, overturning the Dred Scott decision. Along with the 13th and 15th amendments, it was written in the blood of hundreds of thousands of members of the Union Army and Navy who defeated the slave masters.

States rights vs. human rights

The Laken Riley bill would also allow state attorney generals to sue the federal government on immigration matters. It gives them the right to take the State Department to court if visas are issued to people from countries that don’t allow

Continued on page 7

racism on anti-immigrant bill

Continued from page 6

deportations from the United States.

This not only echoes Trump's ban on immigrants from Muslim countries. It also recalls the old Confederate slogan of "states' rights." Immigration, like tariffs, was always a matter for the federal government.

Ronald Reagan began his 1980 presidential campaign by calling for "states' rights" in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Reagan – who called the people of Watts, California, "mad dogs" – did so where

the martyrs James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner were murdered by the Mississippi Ku Klux Klan.

Any actions by state officials, like the corrupt homophobic and transphobic bigot Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, concerning immigration recalls the repudiated doctrine of "interposition."

Segregationists claimed that state legislatures had the right to overturn U.S. Supreme Court decisions. That's what the Mississippi legislature did in 1956 by unanimously declaring invalid the

Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board* decision that banned school segregation.

The decision of most Senate Democrats to turn their backs on immigrant rights shows that we have to organize ourselves. The demonstrations scheduled in Washington, D.C., and across the country against Trump's inauguration are a good start.

The labor movement should call a new Solidarity Day against Trump. We need to continue to struggle to stop the genocide in Gaza and the war against poor people here in the United States. #

'Donald Trump is scared of us!': Brooklyn says NO! to fascism

By Struggle-La Lucha New York

Jan. 20 – Hundreds of people marched down Harriet Tubman Way (Fulton Street.) today in Brooklyn, New York, determined to resist fascist Trump. They chanted, "We're not scared of Donald Trump; Donald Trump is scared of us!"

The militant action was called by the December 12th Movement for Human Rights. It began at Jitu Weusi Plaza, named for the Black educator and activist who fought for community control of New York City schools.

D12 chairperson Omowale Clay chaired the rally. He reminded listeners of Dr. King's opposition to the U.S. war against Vietnam. A loudspeaker played King's April 4, 1967, anti-war address given in Manhattan's Riverside Church.

Dr. King declared from the pulpit that the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world today – my own government." Exactly one year later, he would be executed in Memphis, Tennessee.

It's obscene that Donald Trump was inaugurated president on the federal holiday that people fought for to honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Speakers remembered the late Viola Plummer – former chairperson of the December 12th Movement – who passed the previous year on Jan. 15, Dr. King's birthday. Plummer devoted 70 years of her life as a fearless freedom fighter.

People marched out in military order,



The December 12 Movement led a rally and march against Trump on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. SLL photo

two by two, led by those carrying African liberation flags designed by the honorable Marcus Garvey. They proceeded down Harriet Tubman Way through the heart of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Black Community.

Drivers of cars and other vehicles honked in agreement while those on the sidewalk showed their support. At Nosstrand Avenue – the heart of Bed-Stuy – people marched around, occupying the

intersection.

Going further east, the march ended at Malcolm X Blvd., across from Boys and Girls High School. Speakers at the concluding rally included State Senator Jabari Brisport and representatives of Black Men Build and PAL-Awda, the Palestinian Right to Return Coalition.

The people will defeat Trump and all the fascists! #

From Baltimore to New Orleans, workers fight back, hit the streets!

By Gregory E. Williams

Following is a talk from the Jan.18 Honor Dr. King Jr. Rally and March, organized by the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore, launching the new Peoples Fightback Network. Those gathered stand in solidarity with Baltimore's sanitation workers, for union rights and worker safety, and against war and genocide. The rally took place at McKeldin Plaza with the march ending at City Hall. Gregory E. Williams is a co-editor of Struggle - La Lucha.

Hi everybody, it's an honor to be with you all here in the struggle. I'm a public health worker visiting from New Orleans. This is my first time in Baltimore, and in talking to comrades here, I'm learning so much about the people's day-to-day struggles, but also the incredible fightback. There are so many similarities between our two cities.

For example, with the ongoing Baltimore sanitation workers' struggle. The conditions sound so similar. Back in 2020, at the height of the pandemic, sanitation workers went on strike in majority-Black New Orleans. They were employed by Metro Services Group, a private company contracted by the city.

'I've been to the mountaintop' A call to action then and now

Continued from page 5

can fight for material change for city workers.

Other issues in the film that are present today are the suppression of unions and the plantation mentality. Workers at Amazon and Starbucks are striking for fair wages and safer working conditions.

However, much like Mayor Loeb refused to negotiate these demands, leadership at these corporations refuse to work with unions to increase wages and improve worker safety.

Inmates fighting California wildfires

The plantation mentality plagues incarcerated workers, with inmates fight-



The pandemic really exposed the brutal conditions of capitalism everywhere, and it certainly did in New Orleans, where there was never a real

ing wildfires in California. Inmates fighting fires face dangerous conditions while earning between \$5.80 and \$10.42 per day. This labor is only possible due to an exception in the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery: "except as punishment for crime."

The struggle in Memphis for workers' rights and civil rights never truly ended. Since that time, oppressed peoples and workers across the United States have fought the capitalist state to achieve basic human rights. As this struggle goes forward, we must remember the legacy of the Memphis sanitation workers and Dr. King's fight against racism and capitalism. #

Jan. 18, Baltimore – activists launching Peoples Fightback Network march in honor of Dr. King, standing with sanitation workers and unions while opposing war and genocide.

SLL photo

recovery for the working class following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The pandemic also showed that it is workers who are essential, not the bosses and shareholders. Like in other places, New Orleans sanitation workers have low wages, and they weren't getting hazard pay for risking their lives during COVID-19, or the PPE they needed. They were getting \$11 an hour, some working up to 100 hours a week. They didn't have a union, but they were fed up.

So, they went on strike and formed the City Waste Union. They carried picket

signs saying, "I am a man," just like they did in the Memphis sanitation worker strike in 1968. They didn't get everything they were demanding. Of course, the bosses pulled out all the stops, hiring scabs and all the rest of it. But by the end of 2021, the city approved \$15 an hour for city contract workers.

That's a victory, never mind that those wages still aren't enough, especially with inflation. And just think about the trillions and trillions hoarded by the billionaires – Biden's "oligarchs" that he actually serves. And all the money that the government is spending on war. Think about all that wealth, and workers are the ones creating all of it. And then \$15 looks like the pocket change it is. But it was still a victory.

Sometimes, we feel like our local struggles are merely local, but they're not. It's the whole capitalist system. And since our problems are connected, the fightback has to be connected.

From Baltimore to New Orleans, workers fight back, hit the streets! #

Baltimore revolutionaries say learn from Palestinian resistance

By Colby Byrd

Following is a talk from the Jan. 18 Honor Dr. King Jr. Rally and March, organized by the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore, launching the new Peoples Fightback Network. Those gathered stand in solidarity with Baltimore's sanitation workers, for union rights and worker safety, and against war and genocide. The rally took place at McKeldin Plaza with the march ending at City Hall. Colby Boyd is an organizer with the Peoples Power Assembly.

Good afternoon sisters, brothers, and siblings in the struggle.

The fourth most dangerous job in the United States is sanitation work. And how does the leadership of the city of Baltimore treat the brave workers of sanitation and the overall Department of Public Works? They force them to work in unsafe trucks, force them to work without proper uniform items and protective equipment. They force them to work and drive through cramped spaces and unsafe alleys. They even force them to go out there in the blistering heat or freezing cold to handle all forms of waste and hazardous materials. All without a livable or comparable wage.

And focus on that word FORCE, in all of its hideous meanings. The workers of DPW work to keep the city safe with a whip to their back.

I could spend the entirety of my time up here recounting horror stories I have been told. How they have been mugged, maimed, or murdered on the job. Abandoned by their superiors during times of crisis or denied basic necessities or life-saving care.

But instead I want to talk to you all, my family, about how we can help our brothers and sisters at DPW. We all know it starts at being kind. Ensuring you properly dispose of your trash, slow down in work zones and be friendly to the DPW workers you may cross paths with. After that, we know to call our respective city officials to voice our complaints into the void of the countless other ones. We even know to make our individual feelings on the issue be known and voice it to any who listen, to spread the word. And after all that we all know that we must do more.

A Memphis memorial march in April 1968 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who had been assassinated in Memphis after traveling there to support the sanitation workers strike.



Photo: University of Memphis Libraries

Many of us here have organized and mobilized for other crises befalling oppressed communities all around the world. From Palestine to the Philippines, we have collectively analyzed the systems that keep the people down and have committed to ending them. I would like to specifically raise the Palestinian struggle here today. The harmony between the people driven to action around the world and the Resistance battling the enemy within the heart of the Entity is the specific layer of the struggle I am raising. Through to this day, as the Resistance has called on us, we have answered however we can. When the people of Palestine were forced and bombed into tents, students turned campuses into encampments. As the Resistance attacked the occupiers' bases, students occupied campus buildings. As the Houthis attacked Maersk in the Red Sea, we unmasked them in our ports. When they escalated overseas, we never failed at escalating here.

Let us remind the world that it was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who said, "I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!" Let us remind the world that he also told us "the price that America must pay for the continued oppression of the Negro and other minority groups is the price of its

own destruction." He knew that America in its current form was in no way accepting of the oppressed peoples of the world, and died fighting to change it.

After the assassination of Dr. King, the government made sure to bomb that mountain and the promised land. COINTELPRO, the war on drugs, mass incarceration, and police brutality forced us to find a new way to these ideals. Here in Baltimore, following the deaths of Ronald Silver II and Timothy Cartwell, it has been made crystal clear that the City Council and the mayor, Brandon Scott, would rather follow in the footsteps of the Memphis City Council and Mayor Henry Loeb of 1968 than work to achieve the vision of Dr. Martin Luther King. The government, to no surprise, would rather try to cover up these problems than actually fix them.

In fact, I would go so far to say that the city government is actively using these deaths and all of the mistreatment of the workers to quietly strip more rights and protections from the workers. Do not forget that they brought in the anti-worker and reactionary law firm of Conn Maciel Carey LLP out of Washington D.C. to "conduct a thorough review of DPW's safety policies, practices, and procedures." The city is doing everything it can to keep the workers divided and away from community-based solutions in order to continue this suffocating oppression.

The resistance in Palestine calls its

Continued on page 10

ANNEXATION REDUX

Trump's expansionist threats unmask

By Lev Koufax

In the past few weeks, we've seen a buzz in the corporate media about President-elect Donald Trump's inflammatory rhetoric on annexation.

As Trump approaches his second term in office, he has ramped up his talk about territorial expansion. His rhetoric has thus far targeted Canada, Mexico, Panama, and, most prominently, Greenland.

Trump undoubtedly represents a sector of the U.S. ruling class that believes in more overt and public U.S. domination of the Western Hemisphere. That said, it should be made clear that the U.S. ruling class has had its eyes and hands on all the places Trump targeted for decades.

Trump's language marks a bit of an increase in intensity, but the policies he talks about aren't exactly fresh objectives for the U.S. ruling class. Since the early 19th century, the United States has maintained a consistent policy of expanding its interests, whether it be economically, territorially, or militarily.

During the colonial period, the U.S. used a settler movement driven by manifest destiny propaganda to expand West into Indigenous and Mexican land. Eventually, the military backed that settler movement. Parasitic ruling class families, such as the Vanderbilts and the Rockefellers, followed the settler and military expansion with massive investments in the stolen land.

The wealth plundered from the manifest destiny period (colonization) allowed the U.S. to take steps toward becoming an imperial power. It is in this form, the imperialist form, that the U.S. has spread its fingers around the world. Donald Trump simply aims to maintain that policy. This rhetoric is a minor unmasking of reality. The history of Mexico, Canada, Panama, and Greenland bears out this point.

U.S. King in North America

After World War II, the U.S. asserted itself as the dominant imperialist power after the widespread destruction in Europe and East Asia. As part of its newfound hegemony, the U.S. began exercising increased economic and diplomatic power against its neighbors.

In many ways, Canada has been a territory of the U.S. for decades. The two countries' economies, particularly their supply chains, are completely integrated. Billions of dollars in goods and services and hundreds of thousands of people cross the U.S.-Canadian border every year.

However, all this business is done on terms set by the United States through the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement, now rebranded as the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement. On top of economic control, the United States military and diplomatic agendas are almost always matched by Canada.

The Canadian military joined the U.S. military in its wars on Korea, Iraq, Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan. In fact, the militaries work so closely that Canadian military brass floated the idea of complete integration into the U.S. military in 2017. Even in the current period, Canada has followed the United States' example, pumping \$9 billion into NATO's war in Ukraine.

For as much influence the U.S. has exercised in Canada, it pales in comparison to the ravages of imperialism enacted upon Mexico and its people. U.S. dominance over Mexico began with the theft of over 55% of Mexico's territory in 1848, not including Texas. At the end of its provoked war against Mexico, the U.S. asserted horrendous terms on Mexico through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

In the 20th century, Mexico was held hostage by U.S. corporations that operated maquiladoras in the northern provinces and paid no taxes to the Mexican government. These same mega corporations scuttle any attempt in Mexico to empower workers or maintain Mexico's resources for the Mexican people.

As bad as NAFTA was for Canada, it was far worse for Mexico. NAFTA completely eliminated Mexican tariffs on imported U.S. goods, allowing U.S. corporations to flood Mexico with consumer goods.

In terms of security and foreign pol-

Continued on page 11

Baltimore revolutionaries say learn from Palestinian resistance

Continued from page 9

ability to communicate through spatial differences and any barriers imposed by the occupier "the unity of the fields." This constant communication through signals and actions allows the many different factions within the resistance to stay unified through the highs and lows of the campaign for liberation and never fall victim to cooperating with counter-industrial forces.

Bringing it back to Baltimore DPW, I hope you all understand what I am trying to get at. With the workers in a constant daily battle for their survival, they are forced into positions where they are taken advantage of by the city. This is not

to say that they have not escalated the struggle; in fact, the DPW workers have been and continue to signal to the community, awaiting a signal in return to show that we see them and are ready to weather the storm with them – in other words, escalate.

It was Fredrick Douglass who said that "if there is no struggle, there is no progress."

We must not let the city continue to choke the voices of our class siblings at the Department of Public Works any longer. We must adopt the unity of the fields strategy and free the workers of DPW by showing them that the community, their fellow workers, and fellow human beings will not stand idly by while they suf-

fer at the hands of the city. Here in 2025 I say we learn from the Palestinian people and resistance. We dig into that mountain and make it ours; we tunnel our way to the Promised Land unapologetically, and we fight for those we have lost. We organize and fight together through any barriers imposed by the city, and together with the workers, we can smash the culture of oppression here in Baltimore.

Long live the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Long live the hard-working and brave workers of Baltimore DPW

Long live the Palestinian people and the resistance

Long live international solidarity

Thank you #

longstanding policy

Continued from page 10

icy, the Mexican government has long been forced to adhere to U.S. provocations against other Latin American countries. Further, the U.S. has forced Mexico to spend billions on a futile “war on drugs.” U.S. imperialism has used the leverage of foreign aid money and IMF loans as a trump card over any potential Mexican attempts to nationalize its resources or assert independence from the U.S.

All this is to say, Trump’s rhetoric isn’t a new escalation against neighbors and allies. It is simply the U.S. ruling class demanding more in tribute payments from countries that it already dominates.

Panama intervention: nothing new

The government of Panama has long been forced to serve U.S. interests regarding the administration and control of the Panama Canal. After the initial construction of the canal finished in 1903, the Panamanian government at the time, under severe diplomatic pressure, signed a treaty giving control of the Panama Canal to the U.S. in perpetuity. The U.S. exercised complete control of the Panama Canal Zone until 1979, when President Jimmy Carter signed a treaty transferring control of the Canal to Panama.

At the time, the entire right-wing establishment condemned Carter’s move and has condemned his decision to this day. Just 12 years later, the U.S. invaded Panama to reassert its influence. The U.S. military murdered thousands of people and left tens of thousands homeless. However, its goals were achieved, and it has maintained a strong presence in Panama to this very day.

Greenland: rhetoric vs. reality

2019 was the first time Donald Trump raised a possible annexation or purchase of Greenland. However, this was not the first time the U.S. had discussed the possibility of acquiring Greenland from Denmark.

Greenland has long been a target of interest for the U.S. imperialists. The U.S. government has attempted to acquire Greenland four times: in 1867, 1910, 1946, and 2019. Although the impe-



The Trump jet in Nuuk, Greenland, on January 7, carrying Donald Trump Jr. on a visit.

rialists’ reasons for desiring Greenland have changed since its first proposal in 1867, they have always revolved around capitalist economic interests and control of the Western Hemisphere.

It is important to note that Trump’s rants about Greenland should not be viewed as a violation of Denmark’s sovereignty but as a violation of the already colonized people of Greenland. The vast majority of Greenland’s population are Inuit, not Danish. Denmark violated the Inuit peoples’ right to self-determination when it seized Greenland. The United States’ desire to control Greenland is about its own interests, not a conflict with Denmark, which is considered the most pro-U.S. member of the European Union.

In the mid-19th century, the U.S. feared an attack from a stronger European country; thus, it sought Greenland as a potential strategic point of naval defense. In 1910, Greenland was a pawn in the United States’ attempt to take control of the lucrative “Danish West Indies.” Eventually, the U.S. was successful and purchased what is now called the “U.S. Virgin Islands” in 1917.

Nonetheless, the U.S. never gave up on Greenland. In 1946, the U.S. military was behind another major push to purchase Greenland. This proposal came after five years of U.S. military rule in Greenland during World War II. The U.S. military invaded Greenland after Denmark fell to Nazi Germany in 1941, stating that it aimed to protect Greenland from German aggression. In reality, the U.S. reason for invading in 1941 was the same as its reason for the pur-

chase proposal in 1946: to establish a strong U.S.-led NATO jump-off point for an attack against the Soviet Union.

Even though the U.S. never formally acquired Greenland, it has maintained a significant military presence there since 1951. So, why is Trump focused on Greenland now? Well, some of the reasons are the same as they always have been. Greenland serves as a strategic military point against Russia for naval and air forces. However, the ruling class’ interest in Greenland goes far beyond military dominance. Greenland has two massive deposits of rare earth elements that are used to enhance various types of electronics, ranging from military equipment to domestic telecommunications.

For decades, the U.S. has depended on China to import rare earth elements. Considering the escalating trade war against China, this is no longer acceptable. Trump wants to ensure access to Greenland’s minerals and deny Chinese investment in those same minerals. The complete annexation of Greenland would undoubtedly achieve that end to some extent. However, Trump doesn’t need to invade or purchase Greenland to achieve this.

It is far more likely that Trump is using this rhetoric to leverage a deal with Denmark that ensures the U.S. mining industry’s access to Greenland’s rare earth minerals and that China will be cut out completely. Nonetheless, the result is the same: the U.S. imperialists tightening their already strong grip on the Western hemisphere economically and strategically. #

U.S. Senate votes unanimously to confirm warmonger Rubio

By Stephen Millies

On the same day that Donald Trump was inaugurated as a wannabe dictator, every U.S. senator voted to confirm Florida Sen. Marco Rubio as Secretary of State. There wasn't a single no vote.

Rubio is a super war hawk who is determined to overthrow the governments of Cuba and Venezuela. He's such a vicious enemy of the People's Republic of China that the Chinese government has barred him from entering the country.

Yet Bernie Sanders voted to confirm Rubio. So did every Democrat in the Senate. It shows how phony and useless the Democratic Party's leadership will be to oppose Trump's program of war, racism, and cutbacks.

Rubio told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that China was "the most potent and dangerous near-peer adversary this nation has ever faced." He claimed that "in less than 10 years virtually everything that matters to us in life will depend on whether China will allow us to have it or not — everything from the blood pressure medicine we take to what movies we get to watch."

"Holy hypertension," Robin might have said to Batman about this war propaganda. Iran will continue to be a target as will Yemen.

Marco Rubio was sworn into office by race-baiting Vice-President JD Vance, who claimed that Haitian residents of Springfield, Ohio, were eating cats and dogs. Within hours Rubio met with the ambassadors of India, Japan, and Australia — who, along with the United States, formed the so-called Quad — to plot new aggressive moves against the People's Republic of China.

Trump's choice as Secretary of State also threatened Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Rubio told senators that he was down with Trump using military force against Mexico.

Rubio claimed that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela "is governed by a narco-trafficking organization." That's the same lie that the first President Bush used to invade Panama in 1989, killing thousands of Panamanians.



On the two-month anniversary of the Pulse shooting, Marco Rubio attended the anti-LGBTQ "American Renewal Project" conference in Orlando, Florida. Equality Florida protested, above.

Photo: Barbara Sheridan/Equality Florida

As a political representative of the counterrevolutionaries in Miami, Marco Rubio has a special hatred for socialist Cuba. While Trump & Co. are planning World War 3 against China, the first attacks by the Pentagon may be in Latin America.

What we must do

The resistance that will stop Trump's terrorist regime has to be built in our neighborhoods, unions, and movements. We have to protect our fellow workers who are immigrants from being seized by La Migra. Transgender people, particularly youth, must not be victimized.

The labor movement — marching alongside all those oppressed and threatened — needs to call a new Solidarity Day. It's only poor and working people that can stop Trump and fascism.

Never forget that 22 Democrats in the House of Representatives in 2023 joined with Republicans to censure Rashida

Tlaib — the only Palestinian-American in Congress — for attacking the genocide in Gaza. The next year, she stood alone to oppose Netanyahu when the bloody war criminal addressed Congress.

Millions of dollars were spent to defeat Cori Bush, Tlaib's fellow fighter in Congress. Any elected official who wants to do the right thing will face retribution.

It was the Democratic caucus that removed Harlem congressperson Adam Clayton Powell, Jr, as chair of the House Education and Labor Committee. Powell fought to raise the minimum wage, whose real value has dropped 32% since it was last raised in 2009.

The working class — which includes all the unemployed and those locked up in prison — also needs its own political party. A party that's socialist, fights all forms of bigotry, and whose elected members won't vote for a warmonger like Marco Rubio.

Into the streets to stop Trump! #

Oligarchy already rules: Top 0.1% gained \$6 trillion under Biden

By Gary Wilson

On Jan. 15, President Joe Biden gave his farewell address from the Oval Office. In a speech packed with self-congratulation and lofty claims about his four years in office, Biden made one striking admission.

“I want to warn the country of some things that give me great concern,” Biden said. “And that’s the dangerous concentration of power in the hands of a very few ultra-wealthy people. Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power, and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms.”

Biden cited Dwight Eisenhower’s 1961 farewell address, in which he warned about the dangers of the “military-industrial complex.”

After World War II, Eisenhower was the chief architect of the military-industrial complex. However, more than a decade later, he warned, “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

Biden said, “Six decades later, I’m equally concerned about the potential rise of a tech-industrial complex that could pose real dangers for our country.”

Biden spoke as though this oligarchy were merely “taking shape,” when in fact, it’s already a harsh reality for working people – one that has been decades in the making and upheld by both major parties. And, as Biden knows, the oligarchy is not just the tech-industrial complex.

Capitalism is not democratic. The U.S. is a capitalist republic but not a democracy. As Aristotle explained, democracy means the rule of the poor. Rule by the rich is an oligarchy. Aristotle says the real difference between oligarchy and democracy is whether the wealthy or the poor rule.

The settler war of independence from the British colonizers was led by men of wealth – merchants, bankers, and plantation owners. The Constitution set some democratic rights (limited to men only;



none for women, Indigenous peoples, or enslaved people), but the Constitution did not establish a democracy. The House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Presidency are all set up to ensure control by wealth. Put simply, money rules. What’s taken place over the last decades is that it has become more and more concentrated.

The reality of an entrenched oligarchy

Biden’s remarks ignored his administration’s role in further consolidating the power of a tiny billionaire class.

The very richest are among the biggest winners from President Joe Biden’s time in office, the Seattle Times reports, despite his farewell address warning.

“The 100 wealthiest Americans got more than \$1.5 trillion richer in the past four years, with tech tycoons including Elon Musk, Larry Ellison and Mark Zuckerberg leading the way, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. The top 0.1% gained more than \$6 trillion, Federal Reserve estimates through September show.”

Bidenomics meant the rich were getting richer. The top U.S. billionaires did far better than everyone else.

The Seattle Times adds:

“The 100 largest fortunes combined now exceed \$4 trillion – more than the collective net worth of the poorest half of Americans, spread over 66.5 million households. The share of U.S. wealth owned by the top 0.1%, at nearly 14%, is now at its highest point in Fed estimates dating back to the 1980s.”

Biden leaves office talking about an oligarchy that his policies, together with those of the Democratic and Republican parties, have promoted to protect corporate profits and drive down wages, hit-

ting the working class hardest. When adjusted for inflation, average weekly wages are now less than when Biden came into office.

A president who served corporate interests

While the warning about the threats of the oligarchy and the tech-industrial complex is true, Biden has never done anything other than promote that oligarchy. His administration and the entire political establishment support the economic system – capitalism – that feeds the Wall Street and Big Tech oligarchy.

Donald Trump, along with Biden and many others, represents a capitalist oligarchy that has been concentrating wealth for decades. We have seen how billionaires and mega-millionaires – Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Peter Thiel, and Larry Ellison, among them – use their economic power to undermine labor rights, squeeze wages, promote racism and sexism, attack trans rights, and reshape society in their interests. Their alliances and political maneuvers are not abstract threats; they have immediate consequences.

The path forward for labor

Biden’s farewell address may seem to acknowledge a grim truth, but words alone won’t protect rights or improve wages and conditions. From Amazon to Tesla, from Silicon Valley to Wall Street, the ultra-rich have grown wealthier and more aggressive.

We, the working class majority, need to fight back against these forces. Our solidarity, ability to organize, and determination to defend and expand workers’ rights are potentially far more powerful than all the concentrated wealth of the oligarchy. We cannot rely on hollow speeches or empty promises from any politician. The only way to address this “dangerous concentration of power” is through our collective action – on the picket line and in the streets.

Stand united. Fight for what’s rightfully ours. Together, we can build a socialist future that serves the many, not just the wealthy few. #

Straight line from David Duke to

David Duke is a neo-Nazi and peddler of conspiracy theories who ran for governor of Louisiana in 1991. He was the “Grand Wizard” (national leader) of the Ku Klux Klan from 1974 to 1981. Running as a Republican at the end of Reagan’s presidency, he was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives, where he sat from 1989 to 1992.

In the 1991 campaign, Duke half-heartedly attempted to distance himself from Klan politics, claiming to be a born-again Christian who repudiated his past affiliations. Nevertheless, his campaign was filled with racist dog-whistles like the demonization of “welfare queens,” and he spoke of representing the “white majority.” This surely emboldened his die-hard racist base while – in classic fascist style – he attempted to appeal to broader sections of the population who were tired of being treated like trash by establishment politicians. (In subsequent years, he gave up any pretense that he wasn’t a Nazi, openly spewing Holocaust denial and other racist lies.)

Duke made it through the gubernatorial primary, coming in second to Democrat Edwin Edwards, the last Louisiana governor in the Huey Long tradition. Duke ultimately lost to Edwards, but progressive people and revolutionaries around the country recognized the danger of Duke’s campaign, whether he won or not, as this campaign normalized fascism. In retrospect, it was a precursor to Trump’s MAGA

movement. We can trace a straight line from Duke to Elon Musk giving a Nazi salute at Trump’s 2025 inauguration. There’s also a line going from Duke to Louisiana’s current racist millionaire governor, Jeff Landry.

Following is a historical piece by U.S. Marxist leader Sam Marcy. In this newspaper article, he makes a broad appeal to Louisiana’s working class. He calls on workers of all races and nationalities to reject Duke, based not solely on moral grounds but on their shared class interests; whatever they may say, fascists like Duke and Trump always represent the ultra-rich, often while outright defrauding their supporters (Duke infamously pleaded with his supporters for money, claiming to have fallen on hard times while using the money for gambling).

With the disaster of Trump’s second term upon us, it is a good time to revisit the fightback against the Duke campaign. Readers can judge for themselves whether Marcy’s words are still relevant. Our view is that they are. In fact, the rotten conditions of that period have only gotten worse. Our situation today is drastically more dire. The capitalist-imperialist system is in a much more advanced stage of decay, while capitalist governments around the world are throwing off the liberal-democratic shell like an old skin. The best answer will be a massive, unified movement.

— Gregory E. Williams

Message to the workers of Louisiana

By Sam Marcy (Nov. 21, 1991)

If you are one of the million or so workers in Louisiana, you may be thinking of voting for David Duke in Saturday’s gubernatorial election.

As a worker, you have much to think about these days. Almost everybody agrees these are hard times. Some people say that the depression now hitting this country began 10 years ago in Louisiana.

As a worker, you are concerned with your own livelihood and standard of living. If you have a family or dependents, you surely are concerned about them.

Hawks’ resignation from Duke staff

You have probably heard that Bob Hawks, the state coordinator of the Duke campaign, resigned the other day and blasted Duke. Some say Hawks was an agent for the Edwards campaign working to undermine Duke. Others say he’s a rat leaving a sinking ship.

Whatever the case may be, Hawks raised the religious question. He accused Duke of not following the path of Jesus and said he hadn’t seen him read

the Bible or go to church.

Now, religion should have no place in this campaign. The religious beliefs of any person, whether Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Hindu or whatever, should be considered a private affair. The Constitution prohibits state promotion of religion. This is a political campaign, not a religious one. Throwing it into the campaign diverts attention from the main and fundamental issues, which have to do with the economic, social and political problems in the state of Louisiana.

Corporate letter-writing campaign

You might have received a letter from your employer urging you to vote against Duke. Quite a few companies have been sending such letters to their workers: Stewart Enterprises, the Lamar Corporation – we don’t know who else, but Business Week magazine of Nov. 18 says many.

It is a violation of the Constitution and Labor Relations Law to tell workers how to vote, either in union elections or in political campaigns. Of course, many workers who know the anti-labor record

of the companies they work for are suspicious when their bosses suddenly go on a media campaign against Duke. Where have they been all this time? And why right now?

The way they’re talking now, you would think the gas and oil would evaporate, and the Mississippi River dry up if Duke’s elected. However, these bosses might just as quickly change their minds the day after the election and embrace Duke in the same way the German industrialists and bankers supported Hitler.

These are questions we have to keep in mind when these bosses – and some are the most greedy when it comes to wages and working conditions – suddenly become knights in shining armor urging us to do battle. Whatever their motives may be, it has nothing to do with our own interests as workers.

Every worker ought to question their motivation. It has always been how to get profit out of their enterprises by taking our labor and giving us in return as little as possible.

Continued on page 15

Musk's Nazi salute

Continued from page 14

So, let's not speculate on what their motives may be. Let's examine David Duke independently of what they say and consider his candidacy from the point of view of our class interests as workers.

David Duke has been a state representative long enough that he should have been able to clearly and simply address the burning issues facing Louisiana. These are: joblessness, health care for the hundreds of thousands who have none, and the growing poverty, which is 20% above the national level.

Yet he has introduced no bill, made no speeches, nor raised as much as a whisper in connection with these very profound issues.

Rich state, poor people

David Duke has avoided addressing the most important question of all. That is, why should this state, which is so rich in natural resources, have so many poor people? And why should you as a worker have to worry about your job?

Louisiana is not poor. It has one of the greatest natural resources in the world – oil. It also has another important source of energy – natural gas. It has a big petrochemical industry.

Its fertile soil provides a rich variety of agricultural products that are shipped to all parts of the world. Its forests yield lumber and paper products. Off the coast are rich fishing areas.

So why is life becoming more and more difficult?

Consider one thing that Duke never seems to mention. Whether you make your living as a wage worker or as a professional, your income level is lower than that for comparable work in almost all the Northern, Eastern, and Central states of the United States.

If you are a public school teacher in Louisiana, you earned an average of \$21,280 in 1987. But a teacher in New York state got \$32,620 in that same year (World Almanac, 1988).

Wages have gone up a bit since 1987 but the differential is still about the same. That's a fact, and facts are stubborn things.

This kind of differential in pay between Louisiana and other states holds true not only for teachers or other professionals but for all workers.



While national leader of the KKK in 1977, David Duke patrolled the U.S.-Mexico border in an attempt to terrorize undocumented people. Then, as now, the scapegoating of immigrants serves the filthy rich.

Some may say, and properly so, that wages in Louisiana are better than in Mississippi, Arkansas, or other states of the old Confederacy. But that only helps to make the most important point.

Why should the Southern states have lower wages than the rest of the U.S.? It's not because of geography. It's history that makes the difference.

Jefferson and slavery

Take the case of Louisiana, which became a state in 1812, nine years after it was purchased from France during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson was considered one of the most enlightened people of his day, especially in France, where he served as the U.S. representative. He was a writer and thinker, a scientist and statesman, and the man who wrote the Declaration of Independence with its famous line about "All men are created equal."

Yet Jefferson, as President of the United States, purchased the vast Louisiana Territory, which had been the home of Native people for thousands of years. And instead of taking an enlightened and democratic approach to this territory, Jefferson, a slaveholder himself, was most interested in extending slavery there.

Many think that the mass of the whites were made better off by the en-

slavement of Black people. But it isn't true. The enslavement of great numbers of Black people made a few whites rich and powerful. But the white workers never got anything from slavery to benefit them historically. Far from being lifted above the ordinary workers in Detroit, Cleveland, Los Angeles or Philadelphia, the white workers in the South have lagged behind the rest of the country. The idea that white workers were helped by slavery is a myth.

Of course, there may be some sick psychological satisfaction in being free while others are forced into involuntary servitude. But the upshot of it is that the standard of living of workers in the former states of the Confederacy has never come close to that of workers in the Northern, Central and Western states. Today, more than 125 years after the bloody Civil War, which cost the lives of so many people and finally resulted in the abolition of slavery, workers in Louisiana must still grapple with this problem.

Who's Duke against?

Now comes David Duke, who is running not just against Edwards, but against the Black people. That is what is firmly implanted in the minds of the electorate as Saturday approaches.

But that is not the whole truth. What he carefully conceals is that he is running against the working class as a whole, Black and white.

Duke's slick and well-publicized campaign shows that he's not just an individual. Who's behind him? At first he said he was for the "little people." Now he claims he has letters of support from some of the biggest monopolies, the billionaires, although that has yet to be proven. It is known for sure, however, that he gets a lot of money from millionaires on the far right. (Don't forget, a billionaire has a thousand times as much as a millionaire!) But either way, he is proving himself very useful to the big monopolies.

This is a time when mass anger could very easily focus on the big corporations and banks as they throw workers into the streets and the economy goes into a tailspin. Duke is helping big business by diverting attention away from those responsible for the economic disaster

Continued on page 18

Like David Duke before him, Trump's

Following is a piece by U.S. Marxist leader Sam Marcy on the 1991 gubernatorial campaign of neo-Nazi David Duke in Louisiana. We have already re-published Marcy's "Message to the workers of Louisiana" and argued that the movement against Duke provides lessons in combating fascist Trump.

*In the present piece, Marcy explains what was truly **new** about Duke's campaign. He argued that even if the racism was the same old, same old espoused by segregationists George Wallace and Lester Maddox in the Civil Rights era, Duke was more dangerous because the 1960s and '70s were a very different period politically from the early 1990s.*

Marcy says:

"In the 1960s, when both Maddox and Wallace were trying to become national figures, their type of all-out, segregationist racism was basically *defensive* [emphasis added]: They were trying to hold onto white supremacy as it had existed for a century; they were trying to retain the status quo of racism. At that time, there was an upward, progressive movement throughout the whole country. ...

"In contrast to the present, it was a progressive era. ...

"The Duke movement is not just a defensive attempt to halt the progress of Civil Rights. It is a wholesale offensive to undo and reverse the historic gains made by the Black and other progressive forces.

"The Duke campaign comes in the midst of an anti-labor offensive. Gains made by the workers have been crumbling; the capitalist recession and the attacks on the living standards of the workers have brought frustration and anger. The labor movement has been forced into concession after concession. Strike breaking and scab herding are on the order of the day.

"The situation is ripe for a fascist demagogue to prey upon these frustrations, especially among the middle class who are losing their moorings to the bourgeoisie."

In 2025, most of the progressive gains of the past centuries have *already been reversed*. We are in a deeply reactionary period, with economic conditions rapidly deteriorating and staggering inequality being the order of the day. The situation now is truly ripe for fascist demagogues, as Marcy said of 1991.

– Gregory E. Williams

Perspectives on the Duke campaign

By Sam Marcy, Nov. 14, 1991

The gubernatorial election in Louisiana is not just a referendum on racism. Of course, racism is the principal issue. But there is much more to it. To understand this struggle, you have to go beyond the external features of life in this important Southern state.

To many throughout the country, Louisiana is New Orleans, with the exciting nightlife and Old World charms of the French Quarter. It is the colorful Mardi Gras. But there is another Louisiana.

The other Louisiana

It is the Louisiana of the giant oil refineries, the modern petrochemical plants, and the many metal foundries. Thousands of Black and white workers keep these industries going and depend on them for their livelihood. There are many more workers in the sawmills and paper plants. Still others produce salt and sulfur, which are marketed all over the United States and beyond.

Many thousands of laborers still work in the cotton fields, grow rice and soy beans, raise cattle, and have made Louisiana sweet potatoes a staple throughout the whole country.

But besides being a great producing state, Louisiana is also a vast battlefield

between the working class and the absentee millionaires and billionaires who control all the vital arteries that make it so productive. And now, the capitalist recession has sharpened these class antagonisms.

The ruling class, in its effort to avoid taking responsibility for the deteriorating economic conditions of the workers, Black and white, has picked up a demagogue, one of the most venomous in Southern history. They want David Duke to divert the class struggle into reactionary, racist, and anti-labor channels.

Lester Maddox

The earlier racist endeavors of the ruling class have to be taken into account in order to put the Duke adventure into proper historical context.

What are the specific characteristics that distinguish the current campaign of David Duke from those of Lester Maddox of Georgia and George Wallace of Alabama in the 1960s? Both were openly racist candidates supported by and associated with the Ku Klux Klan. And both got elected as governors.

Lester Maddox, elected governor of Georgia in 1966, was regarded in the rest of the country as no more than an oddity, an old-fashioned type of arch-segregationist. He made segregation the center-

piece of his campaign. A restaurant owner, he had achieved national notoriety a few years earlier when he stood in the door of his restaurant with an ax handle and said he'd physically drive away any Black person who tried to enter. He deliberately closed his establishment rather than desegregate it.

This got him the support of arch-segregationists in the state's ruling circles, who pushed his campaign for governor. However, from a national point of view, Maddox never was a significant political figure outside Georgia and its immediate Southern environs.

Because Maddox couldn't succeed himself as governor, he ran in 1970 for lieutenant governor and was elected along with Jimmy Carter, the new governor. Trying again in 1974, he lost the primary election, thus ending his racist career. An appeal to outright racism was proving inadequate to stop the advance of the Civil Rights movement.

George Wallace

His career bears somewhat of a kinship to that of George C. Wallace, who got even more national attention by defying the order of the federal government to desegregate the public schools of Alabama. This came after the Civil Rights

Continued on page 17

goal is to reverse hard-won rights

Continued from page 16

movement had reached a truly massive scale. Wallace, then governor, got widespread publicity when he stood in the door of the University of Alabama to bar the entrance of African-American students. But he finally capitulated in the face of federal troops sent in by President John F. Kennedy.

Wallace created the biggest stir on the national level when he entered the race for president in 1968, again on a program of preserving white supremacy.

It was no accident, then, that David Duke, in a Nov. 2 television debate, managed to interject the names of both Maddox and Wallace. Did he want to show that both men were linked to the Klan but got elected anyway?

What makes Duke different?

However, there are important differences between David Duke and these earlier racist politicians. What most distinguishes their careers from his is that they operated in a very different epoch.

In the 1960s, when both Maddox and Wallace were trying to become national figures, their type of all-out, segregationist racism was basically defensive: They were trying to hold onto white supremacy as it had existed for a century; they were trying to retain the status quo of racism.

At that time, there was an upward, progressive movement throughout the whole country. The Civil Rights and liberation struggles had started in the 1950s. They picked up speed with the 1954 Supreme Court decision desegregating the schools, and then galloped ahead with the freedom marches in the South and the rebellions that broke out in Watts, Detroit, Harlem, Newark and dozens of other cities when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

Wallace attempted to make his campaign a national one. But it faltered. Some thought that the assassination attempt which left him partially paralyzed was his undoing, but that wasn't it. The real reason was that the Black liberation movement was on the rise and neither Maddox nor Wallace could overcome it. Eventually, Wallace did get back in the Alabama state house, but only because he moderated his program.

The all-out racism of the Maddox-Wallace type proved altogether inadequate to stop the inevitable development and



considerable victories of the Black and Latino movements. Segregation eventually had to be abandoned.

Tried to hold back a progressive tide

The 1960s and '70s were years of upsurge not only of the oppressed nationalities but also of other progressive movements. The anti-war movement was particularly youthful and dynamic. The women's movement was beginning to broaden into a mass awakening. Lesbians and gays were asserting their rights and adopting militant tactics.

The anti-imperialist movement was making gains everywhere. The very existence of China and the Soviet Union provided support to the national liberation struggles and the progressive and anti-imperialist forces.

In contrast to the present, it was a progressive era. Even someone like George Shultz, best known as Reagan's Secretary of State, mediated on behalf of hospital union Local 1199 in the South when he was Nixon's Secretary of Labor. And the union won a victory.

Up until the recession of 1974-76, the labor movement was on the rise. Black and white workers were making gains in the South. Rank-and-file workers often rebelled against union leaders who were too moderate.

Fascists on the offensive

The present racism of David Duke differs in style and tone from that of Maddox and Wallace, even if in essence it's the same old stuff. However, he is much more dangerous because this is a very

different epoch.

The Duke movement is not just a defensive attempt to halt the progress of Civil Rights. It is a wholesale offensive to undo and reverse the historic gains made by the Black and other progressive forces.

The Duke campaign comes in the midst of an anti-labor offensive. Gains made by the workers have been crumbling; the capitalist recession and the attacks on the living standards of the workers have brought frustration and anger. The labor movement has been forced into concession after concession. Strike breaking and scab herding are on the order of the day.

The situation is ripe for a fascist demagogue to prey upon these frustrations, especially among the middle class who are losing their moorings to the bourgeoisie.

Duke is utilizing the economic situation in Louisiana, where the bust began some years ago with the collapse of the oil industry, to foment racism. But what is happening there is part and parcel of a national phenomenon – serious unemployment, wage cuts, and budget cuts which lead to more layoffs of state and municipal workers.

His two rivals in the gubernatorial race, Edwin Edwards and, in the primary, Buddy Roemer, have not addressed these questions at all. They've exacerbated the situation with their policies. They have no more answers than James Florio, the governor of New Jersey, who carries out the same policies but without the racist demagoguery.

Continued on page 19

Message to the workers of Louisiana

Continued from page 15

and blaming everything on the poorest people.

You have heard that Duke used to openly praise Hitler and was selling Nazi literature from his office just two years ago. Hitler, too, directed the anger and fear caused by the 1930s depression away from the biggest bankers and industrialists. He organized a movement that destroyed the progressive and labor movement in Germany, using racist oratory to whip people up. But like Duke, at the beginning of his career Hitler tried to look anti-establishment. He talked against the international bankers, claiming they were part of a so-called Jewish conspiracy.

That didn't stop the biggest German bankers and industrialists from eventually coming in behind him. They needed a Hitler, with all his violent and totalitarian methods, to save their system of capitalism. Eventually, all he had to offer was a monstrous war that ended in smoldering ruins.

Now, in Louisiana, Duke is trying to build a similar movement. And what is its objective? Not to help raise wages for all working people, or guarantee their job security. It is to reverse the entire period of the last 40 to 50 years, when gains have been made not only in civil rights but in union organization, in women's rights, in education, and in social reforms generally. Many of these gains have been under attack since the late 1970s. But Duke wants to sweep them all away.

One of David Duke's most vicious arguments concerns, of course, the question of welfare. He gives the impression that Black people and other minorities consume a great portion of the state budget and that if they were penalized, this would help reduce the budget.

In one form or another, this same argument has been put forward in almost all the states. The more rabid politicians make it a principal point in their election campaigns, calling people on welfare freeloaders, parasites, and so forth.

But who really gets welfare in this country? Who gets the billions and billions of government funds? Not poor people. The ones who devour huge sums from the federal and state budgets are the giant corporations! They've been living on welfare all the years of their existence. Almost all of them are sub-

sidized in one form or another. During the Reagan years, their subsidies came in the form of huge reductions in taxes. It got so ridiculous that some giant oil companies paid less taxes than a working-class family!

In addition, they get special financial benefits through grants for research and development and other forms of hidden subsidies. This is particularly true for military contractors, especially those in aerospace.

Russell Long on corporate welfare

Nobody was more eloquent in describing how big business has brought about the real welfare system in the United States than the former Majority leader and whip from Louisiana, Senator Russell Long. In April 1967, he told the Senate:

"Most campaign money comes from businessmen. ... Many businessmen contribute to legislators who have voted to exempt their businesses from the minimum wage. Businessmen contribute to legislators who have fought against taxes that would have been burdensome to their businesses. ... Power company officials contribute to legislators who vote against public power. ... Bankers, insurance company executives, big moneylenders generally contribute to legislators who vote for policies that lead to high interest rates.

"Many large companies benefit from research and development contracts which carry a guaranteed profit. ... In recent years, quite a battle has developed over the desire of government research contractors to obtain and keep lush private monopoly patent rights on those things discovered with billions of dollars of government research money. The possibility of windfall profits in this area defies imagination. ...

"Drug companies are often able to sell brand-name drug products at anywhere from twice to 50 times the price of identical nonbranded products for welfare and Medicare patients. ... Executives of drug companies will contribute to legislators who vote to permit or bring about such a result.

"Executives of regulated companies contribute to legislators who vote to go easy on the regulation. ...

"Many industries are subsidized. This includes the merchant marine, the shipbuilders, the sugar producers, the cop-

per producers, and a host of others. ...

"This list is merely illustrative; it could be elaborated upon and enlarged to include many more." (Quoted in "The Rich and the Super-Rich" by Ferdinand Lundberg.)

All this welfare for the rich corporations that run Louisiana! But has Duke ever told it like it is? Has he ever tried to mobilize the workers against these rich corporate criminals who thrive off government welfare?

White workers and affirmative action

In addition to welfare, Duke harps on affirmative action. As he tells it, whites are being penalized because the law now requires that Black and Latino workers who have faced past discrimination should be compensated affirmatively in promotions.

There's no reason that affirmative action has to hurt white workers. The discrimination in the past was the result of the policies of the bosses. They instituted discrimination in the workplace, and they should pay for it.

Are there ways to erase racial discrimination in the workplace without taking it out of the hides of white workers? Take the matter of promotions. Say a white male is entitled to a promotion from labor grade 2 to labor grade 3, but a Black (or woman) worker with less seniority is now eligible for the job because of the law on affirmative action. The worker who would have gotten the job on the basis of seniority should also get an equivalent pay increase. That way the worker isn't penalized because of the past discriminatory practices of the company.

There can be many other approaches to make sure that affirmative action doesn't hurt any workers. It is a pity that the labor movement has gradually acquiesced to a half-way measure regarding affirmative action which puts the burden on the workers. It leaves the labor movement open to vicious racism.

Extended jobless benefits

Duke doesn't address the question of why Louisiana pays out so little in unemployment benefits when so many are out of work. Unemployment insurance isn't just a federal program, like Social Security, it's a federal-state system

Wouldn't this be an opportunity for Duke, if he really was for the workers,

Continued on Page 19

Perspectives on the Duke campaign

Continued from page 18

to demand a state extension of benefits? This is particularly important in a state like Louisiana where the crisis has lasted so long that benefits have run out for hundreds of thousands.

Living in Louisiana, you have seen periods of boom as well as bust, especially in the oil and gas industry. The boom periods made the powerful corporations much richer, more aggressive and predatory. But have they left the workers any better off?

Louisiana has the resources to be one of the most self-sufficient states in the union. Instead, it has become more dependent on what is happening to the economy, not just nationally but even globally. Why is that?

If all the natural wealth of Louisiana were being utilized to provide for the needs of the residents of the state, there wouldn't be any problem. But that's not what's happening. Everything is produced in order to make a profit. When the profit system goes bust, the most significant section of the population, the workers, are left helpless.

But the workers don't have to be helpless. We're the majority of the population! If we get together, we can be tremendously powerful. We have the ability to stop everything from moving, as can be seen in other countries when workers go out on a general strike. Certainly, the big bosses are aware of that, and will do all they can to prevent the workers from getting any ideas.

That can mean throwing their weight behind a demagogue like Duke in order to get him elected, so he can channel everything into a racist struggle.

What is needed in Louisiana, as elsewhere, is a change in the relationship between the working class and the capitalist class. It is necessary for the working class to take hold of all the natural resources and means of production and use them for the interests of society as a whole, not for a handful of millionaires and billionaires.

Voting against Duke will help open the road to such a development. #

Continued from page 17

Racism alone could not win in the Louisiana of today, were it not for the economic disaster produced by capitalist decline. Of course, those really responsible for this crisis are not the Black people or the poor, but the bankers and businessmen, especially the oil companies.

Depression spawned Hitler

They are the ones supporting Duke behind the scenes, in the same way the bankers and industrialists supported Hitler – one of Duke's idols. Hitler started off as a local phenomenon in Munich who would never have attained national stature had it not been for the severe and unprecedented capitalist breakdown that began with the stock market crash of 1929 and lasted through the 1930s.

Hitler served the German capitalists by breaking the back of the strong workers' movement there. He used both violence and demagogy to divert popular anger over the economic crisis into antisemitism, making Jews the scapegoats for everything that had gone wrong while diverting attention away from the real capitalist rulers of Germany.

While he did the dirty work of the capitalists by breaking up the workers' organizations and decimating their socialist and communist leaders, he demagogically called his party the National Socialist Workers Party.

Racist scapegoating

The Duke campaign is still in its embryonic stage. Nevertheless, it is clearly a fascist movement that is attempting to utilize the disastrous economic situation in Louisiana, made particularly severe by the slump in oil and gas there, to break into national politics.

The ruling class in Louisiana doesn't want another populist of the Huey Long type, who actually did carry out economic reforms that aided the working class. They want an out-and-out demagogue who can utilize racism and make

promises and yet be totally controlled by big business.

The danger of the Duke campaign goes beyond being an attack against Black people. It's an attack against the whole working class. It's an attempt to reverse historical gains made by Black, white, and Latin people, women, gays, and others. It's a real fascist threat and has profound national and international significance.

It is already public knowledge that Duke's financial contributions come not only from sources in Louisiana but from New York, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. The Maddox-Wallace segregationists had no international connections. Maddox was regarded as an oddity, a curiosity, who represented the past. Wallace had a broader movement, but it, too, foundered on the basis that it really had no national base, let alone international support. It was strictly a Southern racist movement.

The Duke candidacy, however, represents an international phenomenon. Duke finds kinship not only in New York City's racist elements but as far away as Switzerland, France, Germany, and England. Many eyes on the global front are carefully watching what happens in Louisiana.

Even A.M. Rosenthal, a conservative columnist for the New York Times, is greatly alarmed at the prospect of "a Nazi governor" being elected for the first time in the U.S. However, he leaves out the fundamental causes for the rise of the Duke movement – the capitalist economic crisis – just as bourgeois historians leave out what was the basis for the rise of Nazism in Germany.

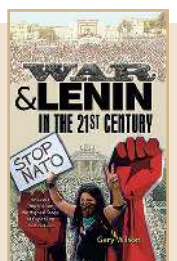
All the more is it necessary to tender the greatest support to the anti-Duke, anti-racist, pro-labor, progressive movement that is arising in response to this very significant threat. As has been seen so many times before, it is the whip of political reaction that stimulates and brings to the fore the vital forces and inexhaustible energy of a working-class resurgence. #

'WAR AND LENIN in the 21st Century'

NEW - Updated to include U.S. complicity in the Gaza genocide and military profiteering.

Published on the centenary of Vladimir Lenin's death. The revolutionary leader of the Soviet Union and key contributor to Marxist theory, wrote "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" in 1916. It remains an influential critique of imperialism.

In paperback or Kindle at tinyurl.com/LeninAndWar



TikTok ban paves way for suppressing

By Gary Wilson

On Jan. 17, the Supreme Court launched a sweeping, unanimous assault on the First Amendment. By ruling in favor of a federal ban on TikTok — the fourth most popular social media platform in the United States — the Court effectively elevated “national security” above constitutional free speech rights.

This move aligns with an increasingly anti-China agenda within the U.S. government, which routinely uses the specter of “foreign adversaries” to justify censorship and attacks on democratic rights.

The ban took effect on Jan. 19. Hours after shutting down, TikTok announced that service would be restored after President-elect Donald Trump said he would sign an executive order on his first day in office to delay enforcing the U.S. ban of the social media platform.

Congress did order that TikTok ownership should be turned over to the U.S. tech-industrial complex by the Jan. 19 deadline, and Trump says his executive order is only to allow time for a U.S. takeover of a controlling interest (50%) of TikTok.

Regardless of what happens next, the Supreme Court’s ruling has far-reaching implications.



Anti-China justifications

Notably, the justices anchored their decision in Congress’s claim that TikTok’s relationship with China — now labeled the primary “foreign adversary” — poses a grave risk.

The justices seem to claim that the ban is not aimed at suppressing particular viewpoints, yet they put “national security” over free speech:

“There is no doubt that, for more than 170 million Americans, TikTok offers a distinctive and expansive outlet for expression ... But Congress has deter-

mined that divestiture is necessary to address its well-supported national security concerns regarding TikTok’s data collection practices and relationship with a foreign adversary.”

In other words, the Court effectively concedes TikTok is a powerful platform for speech — only to elevate the U.S. government’s anti-China stand above the First Amendment.

The enemies list

This logic opens the door to systematic assaults on domestic opposition to war

Continued on page 21

Did Trump ‘fix’ TikTok? Users report

By Gary Wilson

On Jan. 19, after a 12-hour outage, TikTok resumed service for its U.S. users, but many noticed what they believe to be a shift in their experience. Shortly after regaining access on Sunday, creators began posting videos expressing concerns that the platform’s recommendation algorithm felt different.

Some users claimed they were no longer seeing the types of videos typically suggested to them, while others reported issues with their primary feed, search function, and comments, alleging potential censorship. Posts highlighting these changes have garnered millions of likes.

On X, @AlexNaivety declared: “TikTok is dead. ‘Free Palestine’ is now considered a symbol of hate speech.”

Some speculated that the shutdown involved a system jigger to make changes demanded by Donald Trump.

At Trump’s inauguration

TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company, but it operates independently, with its headquarters in Singapore. The Chinese government does not own TikTok. The Singapore-born and Harvard-trained CEO, Shou Zi Chew, attended Trump’s inauguration, sitting next to Tulsi Gabbard, Trump’s pick for national intelligence director.

When the platform came back online, U.S. users were greeted with a message crediting its return to Trump: “As a result of President Trump’s efforts, TikTok is back in the U.S.!”

Shortly after taking office on Jan. 20, the president issued the order to delay the app’s ban for 75 days. Trump announced on Truth Social that the executive order “extends the period of time before the law’s prohibitions take effect, so that we can make a deal.”

During a press briefing on Jan. 20, Trump said that he envisions either Tesla CEO Elon Musk or Oracle Chairman Larry Ellison as potential buyers of TikTok.

Tech imperialism

TikTok’s success and its ability to compete with U.S.-based social media giants like Facebook and Instagram made it a target. The TikTok ban is part of a broad effort to assert control over a highly successful global platform that operates outside U.S. corporate ownership.

Some call it “tech imperialism,” with the foreign-owned platform being forced to either turn over ownership or be banned. Compelling a foreign company to sell its U.S. operations has never been done before.

Continued on page 21

speech in anti-China crusade

Continued from page 20

or any policy the government designates as aiding “foreign adversaries.” Once a country (in this case, China) is designated an enemy, any expression or platform seen as potentially advantageous to that so-called adversary can be curbed.

TikTok’s ban was initiated under Trump’s first administration, spurred by Republican “China hawk” Michael Gallagher and other anti-China crusaders. The justices also cited the Biden administration’s 2021 Executive Order on “Protecting Americans’ Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries,” which defines “foreign adversary” so broadly as to encompass any government or organization considered “significantly adverse” to Wall Street and U.S. corporate interests.

Under such an expansive definition, practically any government from Beijing to Panama City could be labeled a hostile actor if it dared challenge U.S. policies. Indeed, Trump recently called the Panama Canal a “national security” asset. If Panama were to resist U.S. control of the Panama Canal, it, too, could be construed as posing a “threat.” In this context, banning an app because of its Chinese ownership signals how aggressively U.S. policymakers are prepared to stoke anti-China paranoia under the banner of defending “national security.”

Criminalizing social media

Particularly insidious is the Court’s reference to “Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project (2010),” which criminalized providing “material support” to designated “foreign terrorist organizations” — even if that support was simply legal advice. By drawing an analogy to China’s tech companies, the ruling essentially endorses the notion that working with or using technology from a “foreign adversary” is tantamount to collusion or aiding hostile interests.

The hypocrisy is striking. U.S. government agencies and corporations, with a documented history of unlawful surveillance (brought to light by Edward Snowden’s 2013 revelations), are now positioning themselves as defenders of privacy and security, justifying the ban of Chinese platforms on these grounds.

The NSA and other U.S. agencies have systematically gathered personal communications on a massive scale, aiming at “total information awareness.” However, none of this has produced bans on U.S. companies or apps. Instead, only the “adversary” label is invoked to quash a highly successful Chinese-owned platform that is not accused of gathering any more data than all other social media companies. In fact, the Washington

Post found that TikTok gathers less data than Facebook. The Chinese government would never need TikTok to get access to personal info, which is widely available through multiple sources.

The Supreme Court falsely claims that TikTok’s ban doesn’t target specific viewpoints, but the legislative record shows otherwise. Leading Congressional voices have consistently accused TikTok of pushing “Chinese propaganda” and undermining pro-U.S. narratives, citing the platform’s lack of “fact checking,” allowing everything from the use of pro-Palestinian hashtags to criticisms of Washington’s foreign policy. Senator Mike Gallagher — one of the ban’s main orchestrators — branded TikTok “digital fentanyl” and openly called for crushing the platform to counter “the CCP’s worldview,” that is, to impose a capitalist ideology and an imperialist agenda.

The ban on TikTok represents more than just a regulatory action against a social media platform; it signifies a strategic maneuver in the escalating U.S. campaign against China. As the U.S. government broadens its anti-China initiatives, fundamental democratic rights, such as freedom of speech and the right to speak out, are among the casualties. #

ensorship after outage

Continued from page 20

The action against TikTok comes amid what many describe as a “New Cold War” by the U.S. against China. TikTok, with its massive user base and cultural influence, became an especially prominent target.

Washington is actively targeting Chinese tech companies that are gaining global prominence and influencing technology standards. This is evident in actions taken against Huawei’s 5G infrastructure, TikTok’s social media platform, and efforts to restrict China’s access to advanced semiconductor technology. Tech imperialism indeed. #

TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew attended Trump’s inauguration on Jan. 20. Notably, Trump was flanked by tech billionaires like Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, and Nazi-saluting Elon Musk.



STOP funding wars – FUND CLIMATE ACTION

Continued from page 1

there long ago before the glitterati began moving in. They are working class.

Other working-class people have homes passed down from parents and grandparents who moved there when it was possible for people of modest income. There has also been a staggering loss of jobs for people who serviced the wealthier class, such as gardeners, housekeepers, and maintenance workers.

Impact on African American community

Altadena was a rare community where African American residents had found a welcoming home during the great migration from the Jim Crow South. At its height in 1970, the Black population of Altadena was 30%. Even now, it is higher than the national average Black population at 18%.

Until this fire, statistics painted a picture of a prosperous community. Generational wealth, with home ownership double the national average for African American neighborhoods, was evident. However, the 1960s Civil Rights Movement forced the passage of the Fair Housing Act, which outlawed the practice of redlining.

Banks in most areas of the country evaded the law and continued racist discrimination in housing. But not Altadena. Homeownership is where most wealth is for working-class families. The loss from the fires in this beautiful community in the foothills of the Angeles Forest is a tragic setback for thousands of people.

Criminal acts of capitalism

As soon as the scale of the crisis became apparent, news of all the failures and criminal acts of capitalism began to emerge online and on social media. State Farm, the largest property and casualty insurer in the U.S., had raked in \$104.2 billion in 2023, but three months before the fire, it began pulling out of “risky” markets, including Southern California, where it refused to renew many homeowners’ policies. A half dozen other insurance companies had already pulled out before this year.

News of the \$17 million cut to the LA Firefighters’ budget reemerged in the headlines too. The earlier wrangling over the city budget gave an increase to notoriously racist LAPD at the same time as cutting fire safety. The cuts forced the

department to lay off civilian staff, including mechanics, and dozens of fire trucks sat idle in an LAFD parking lot as Altadena and Pacific Palisades burned.

Landlords are price gouging

Activists in the LA Tenants Union put together a spreadsheet that lists hundreds of greedy landlords who are price gouging. It shows the already absurd costs of housing in LA that, in hundreds of cases, doubled or tripled as soon as the news of the fires broke. Those landlords belong in jail. Gov. Gavin Newsom declared it illegal, but the record of California prosecuting price gougers, including landlords, after disasters is nil. It has never happened.

The fire in Pacific Palisades began at about 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 7. Despite warnings about the weather and the dry conditions, the city and county fire departments’ response was less than in previous times of danger. The fire quickly overwhelmed their resources.

The first evacuation order was late, but thousands began evacuating anyway. Sunset Boulevard is the main route to the other Los Angeles neighborhoods. It became so clogged that people abandoned their cars and fled the flames on foot. Later, to bring in more fire equipment, bulldozers smashed cars out of the way.

The other major fire began in the evening near Eaton Canyon, quickly engulfing Altadena and parts of Pasadena. The winds were too violent for helicopters that were sent to drop water. Firefighters’ command centers repeatedly relocated away from the flames. A nursing home housing 93 residents self-evacuated. Staff pushed patient’s beds and wheelchairs into the parking lot to wait for rescue.

As of Jan. 18, the Eaton and Pacific Palisades fires are still burning. Firefighters are making progress on containment, having had their ranks bolstered by hundreds of prisoners being paid \$10.24 a day. Firefighters from the Navajo Nation, Mexico, and Canada are all helping. A brief respite from the fierce Santa Ana winds is giving them a window of opportunity as well, but the winds are expected to pick up again on Jan. 22, according to the meteorologists at the National Weather Service. Already, the fires have burned the largest urban area in California’s history.

Climate change fuels unprecedented destruction

Southern California is a fire-prone area, but the fires that began on Jan. 7 are qualitatively different. Capitalist-induced climate change has set up disastrous fires in two ways.

Southern California’s regular rainy and dry seasons did not occur in 2024. Instead, a historic, long, terrible drought was followed by heavy rains, which produced a lot of new vegetation. Then came eight months of virtually no rain, which dried the underbrush of chaparral and other plant life to massive amounts of tinder.

Under these conditions, a spark caused by anything can start a fire, and the hot, dry Santa Ana winds are a regular weather pattern that can make fires challenging to extinguish. This time, global warming intensified the winds, which generally can gust up to 70 miles an hour. They whipped through the mountain passes at speeds up to 100 miles an hour.

The monstrous winds blew hot embers for miles. They pushed the flames forward throughout Pacific Palisades and Altadena communities, creating the two worst wildfires in California in living memory.

Investigations are underway to determine what sparked the two major fires, as well as several others that were smaller. Evidence is being considered that smoldering embers from a previous fire set off by New Year’s Eve fireworks reignited in the neighborhood called the Highlands of Pacific Palisades.

Electrical equipment explosions

Witnesses, videos, and photos show sparks and the sounds of explosions near electrical equipment in the hills above Altadena. Southern California Edison owns the equipment, but officials won’t definitively say they are at fault.

Altadena residents have launched lawsuits. Attorneys for Evangeline Iglesias, who lost her home, asked a judge to order SCE to preserve evidence, citing the possibility of a coverup.

Out of 20 California wildfires since the turn of the century, eight were proven to be caused by faulty electrical equipment or power lines being broken from towers during high winds. This problem could be mitigated by burying power lines.

Many power lines in Europe are “undergrounded.” SCE says it is working on an “undergrounding” project. The com-

Continued on page 23

Open source vs. closed doors: How China's DeepSeek beat U.S. AI monopolies

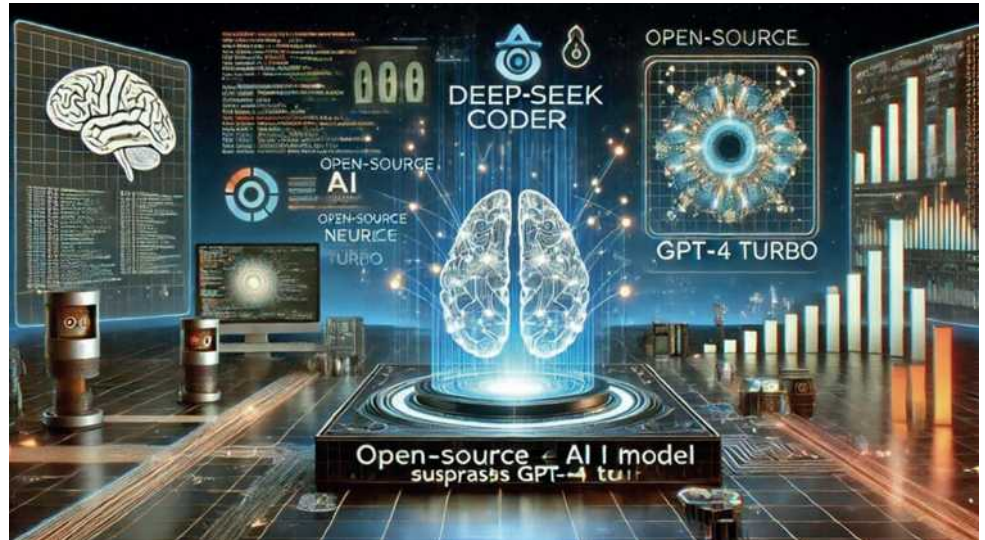
By Gary Wilson

China's DeepSeek AI has just dropped a bombshell in the tech world. While U.S. tech giants like OpenAI have been building expensive, closed-source AI models, DeepSeek has released an open-source AI that matches or outperforms U.S. models, costs 97% less to operate, and can be downloaded and used freely by anyone.

While the U.S. tried to monopolize AI with economic sanctions on China and embargoes on semiconductor technology to China, China's technologically adept workforce quietly worked around these barriers.

While the Trump administration was busy constructing a \$500 billion AI boondoggle called Stargate, DeepSeek engineered a technological breakthrough that exposed the entire expensive Stargate charade as another giveaway to the wealthy.

DeepSeek's model outperformed OpenAI's best, using less data, less computing power, and a fraction of the cost. Even more remarkable, DeepSeek's model is open-source, meaning anyone can use, modify, and build on it. This stands in stark contrast to OpenAI's closed, profit-driven approach.



Corporate rulers want AI to monitor workers, lower wages, bust unions, or shift work to machines altogether, leading to cutbacks and layoffs. The World Economic Forum famously predicted that AI would replace millions of “useless” human workers by 2030.

Unlike U.S. tech companies seeking monopoly control, DeepSeek treats AI like electricity or the Internet – a basic tool that should be accessible to everyone.

The ability to offer a powerful AI sys-

tem at such a low cost and with open access undermines the claim that AI must be restricted behind paywalls and controlled by corporations. In contrast to monopoly capitalism, this approach offers an alternative that fosters innovation and benefits society in general.

AI, as a public utility, can be used to complement human labor, improve safety, reduce drudgery, and create better-paying jobs rather than eliminate them.

Beyond mere manufacturing, China has methodically built technological ecosystems that now dominate global markets: Huawei's telecommunications, BYD's electric vehicles, CATL's next-generation battery technologies, and Tongwei Solar's advanced photovoltaic systems.

In just 15 years, the technological landscape has changed dramatically. From the United States dominating 60 out of 64 technologies between 2003 and 2007 to China leading in 52 technologies by 2022 — a complete reversal of global technological supremacy. #

Stop funding wars – fund climate action

Continued from page 22

pany says the cost of \$1-3 million per mile presents difficulties, and the project is moving at a snail's pace. Their parent company, Edison International, has a market capitalization of about \$24 billion. The cables are buried in the wealthiest part of Pacific Palisades, the Highlands, but not anywhere in Altadena.

Attorney Ben Crump, the attorney for the family of George Floyd and for many other civil rights cases, is representing the family of retired pharmacy technician Erliene Kelly, who perished in the Eaton Fire in the first wrongful death suit against SCE.

Demanding reparations from Big Oil

Another group of Altadena fire survivors held a press conference to pressure the state for legislation that would demand reparations from Big Oil. Resident

Sam James was quoted in the Guardian when she spoke about the loss of her grandfather's home and the overall loss of Black families' generational wealth. James said, “It should not continuously fall on us to address the consequences of big oil's negligence! They must take responsibility for the harm that they've caused, pay reparations to the affected

Continued on page 25

The U.S. War Drive Against China: What it means for workers

China stands as a global scientific powerhouse, boasting achievements in pollution reduction, and space exploration. The People's Republic has made significant strides in healthcare, education, and sports.

At no point has U.S. monopoly capitalism adopted a hands-off approach toward the development of socialism in China or elsewhere. This book, “The U.S. War Drive Against China: What it means for workers,” aims to illuminate the growing dangers posed by a potential U.S. war against China and to reveal the real enemies of the working class.

<https://tinyurl.com/USWarChina>



Nazi billionaires: Fascism in the

By Lev Koufax

It's not a secret that Elon Musk embraces fascist and reactionary political movements. He makes no attempt to hide his political leanings. Musk's support not just for Trump, but also for the German neo-Nazi party, Alternative for Deutschland or AfD, is open and widely covered in the mainstream press. Musk also financially supports the British Reform Party, another fascist European political party with a deeply anti-immigrant platform.

In recent years, Musk has become a key public figure in the politics of the global ruling class. However, Musk's personal politics are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the role fascism plays in ruling-class politics and the United States' history of recycling different fascist movements and figures to suit the imperialist agenda.

In fact, Elon isn't even the first member of his own family to be prominent in right-wing politics and promote U.S. imperialist interests. South Africa itself provided the imperialists with a new bastion of right-wing demagogues and families after apartheid fell in the early 1990s. After Nelson Mandela took power, many white South Africans who supported apartheid found refuge in the U.S.

But the Musk family's fascist legacy goes even further back than the 1990s. Musk's maternal grandparents, Wyn Fletcher and Joshua Haldeman, were wealthy Canadian doctors with openly Nazi politics in the 1940s. In an interview, Elon's father, Errol, spoke regarding the history of his ex-wife's Nazi parents: "They used to support Hitler and all that sort of stuff. But they didn't know, I don't think they knew what the Nazis were doing. But they [the grandparents] were in the German Nazi party but in Canada. And they sympathise with the Germans."

After the defeat of fascism at the hands of the Soviet Union and other allied forces, Haldeman and Fletcher continued their Nazi activism. However, explicit Nazism within Canadian politics was taboo at the time due to the recent war against Hitler's Third Reich, a war that cost the lives of many Canadian soldiers.

There is an irony here considering the widespread amnesty Canada granted to hundreds of Ukrainian Nazi SS officers,



After giving what was clearly a Nazi salute at Trump's inauguration, Elon Musk brazenly posted a series of Nazi-themed puns on X such as "Bet you did nazi that coming." Even the Zionist Anti-Defamation League condemned these Tweets, after defending Musk's salute as "an awkward gesture in a moment of enthusiasm."

such as Yaroslav Hunka. The Canadian government was widely criticized after the Canadian Parliament honored Hunka publicly. In addition to the Musk family, which is the focus of this article, the Canadian embrace of Ukrainian Nazis is another pertinent example of how the ruling class recycles fascist masses and institutions in the service of their own imperialist agendas.

Nonetheless, finding himself marginalized and alienated, Haldeman moved his career and his family to apartheid South Africa, where his fascist politics were more openly supported. Once in South Africa, Haldeman stayed involved in political life, giving a speech in the 1950s where he asserted that apartheid South Africa was leading "White Christian Civilization" against the "International conspiracy of Jewish bankers" and the "hordes of colored people" he claimed the Jewish bankers controlled. This is Elon's grandfather, and we are supposed to believe Elon's recent Nazi salute was an awkward arm gesture.

It was no surprise when Haldeman and Fletcher's daughter, Maye, married a prominent young right-wing politician and emerald mine investor named Errol Musk. Maye Musk herself has remained a steadfast fascist throughout her entire life. She has long supported Donald Trump, and just in October posted on X, asserting that Democrats only

obtain votes by shipping "illegal immigrants" across the Mexican border. This sort of argument grows directly from the white supremacist "great replacement theory," which asserts a Jewish cabal exists that aims to replace all white individuals in the U.S. with Black people and Latin American immigrants.

Errol remains openly right-wing in his views, and his emerald mine investments raised his family's wealth and influence to a level that only Elon has since eclipsed. Since Elon has established himself as the wealthiest man in the world, he has become more and more emboldened with fascist rhetoric and action. Ultimately, none of this would have been possible without the hyper-exploitation of African people under apartheid and the broader acceptance of fascist politics by Western imperialist powers like the U.S. and Canada.

The Haldeman and the Musk families were not the only supporters of formerly apartheid or fascist states to spread their wings and exert greater racist influence. There is no shortage of examples.

Another prominent example from South Africa is forensic physician David Fowler, who gained widespread condemnation after his testimony in defense of Derek Chauvin, the brutal racist cop who murdered George Floyd. Fowler left South Africa for Baltimore, Mary-

Continued on page 25

Elon Musk family tree

Continued from page 24

land, in 1991, just a year after the official end of apartheid. Apparently, the idea of practicing medicine in a country where the indigenous African population held political power did not appeal to an apartheid mad scientist.

Over the next two decades, Fowler would assist the Baltimore Police Department and the Maryland State Police in a large-scale cover-up of racist police murders, most notoriously the murder of 19-year-old Anton Black. Fowler's career came under increased scrutiny after he testified that Derek Chauvin's knee on George Floyd's neck for almost 10 minutes was not the cause of Floyd's death. For all those reasons, over 1,300 cases of individuals who died while in custody of Maryland police were reopened in 2021.

For the U.S., the most infamous reappropriation of Nazi officials was "Operation Paperclip," which saw the CIA arrange for 1,600 German scientists, engineers, and technicians to secretly leave Germany and join the U.S. in the cold war against the Soviet Union. Many of these officials were high-ranking members of the Nazi party. Some experimented on Jewish prisoners. None of them were ever brought to justice.

Even Germany itself repurposed Nazi officials into what was known for most of the second half of the 20th century as "West Germany" or the "Federal Re-

For the U.S., the most infamous reappropriation of Nazi officials was "Operation Paperclip," which saw the CIA arrange for 1,600 German scientists, engineers, and technicians to secretly leave Germany and join the U.S. in the cold war against the Soviet Union. Many of these officials were high-ranking members of the Nazi party. Some experimented on Jewish prisoners. None of them were ever brought to justice.

public of Germany. In the mid-2010s, the current German government conducted a series of investigations into the prevalence of Nazi judges and other justice system officials in the West German government. The final report revealed that in 1957, 77% of senior officials at the justice ministry had been members of the Nazi party. A different study found that the justice department was not even a majority non-Nazi judges until 1972. The last Nazi official, a former prosecutor for Hitler, would not leave the German Ministry of Justice until 1992. The Times of Israel referred to this as "recycling Nazis."

It is beyond telling that all these different imperialist countries and apartheid regimes have such deep problems with fascist infiltration. The fact is that the imperialist ruling class, some of whom, like Elon Musk, are fascists themselves, have historically used and continue to use the fascist mass movement to enforce their plunder of the planet.

The imperialist ruling class constantly tells the world that they are the bringers of democracy and civilization. They insist that their enemies are so savage and barbaric as to justify any force necessary to defeat them. Yet, some of the most powerful imperialists, such as the entire Musk family, are openly and proudly Nazis themselves. The supposed democratic Germany during the Cold War was chock-full of Nazi judges. One of the largest historically Black cities in the U.S. suffered under a recycled South African apartheid medical examiner for two decades.

New boss, same as the old boss.

The working people of the world don't need Nazi billionaires, Nazi doctors, Nazi judges, or any Nazis at all. The working class needs jobs, land, food, water, health care, and education. Down with the imperialist ruling class. Down with Elon Musk.

Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.

Stop funding wars – fund climate action

Continued from page 23

communities who lost their homes and businesses, and take immediate steps to mitigate further damage."

A global crisis

This tragic episode for Los Angeles is a microcosm of the global crisis of climate change. Huge capitalist corporations continue to drill and frack for oil and gas even with all the crises, death, and destruction caused by the heated atmosphere. Like the residents of Altadena, Global South countries have to fight the U.S. and other big imperialist countries for reparations in the form of the Loss and Damage fund created at the UN's series of annual climate conferences.

The Biden administration's flagship

legislation was supposed to address climate change. It was a staggering amount of money – more than \$800 billion – earmarked for mitigation and adaptation. But still not enough.

Furthermore, much of it was directed toward projects that enable rather than phase out fossil fuel exploitation. On the first day of his second term in office, Trump withdrew from the 2015 Paris Agreement.

According to Britain's Met Office, 2024, the hottest year on record, also saw the most significant spike in CO2 emissions ever recorded and has already surpassed the goal of 1.5 set in Paris in 2015 for the first time. The Met's report says that a drastic reduction in fossil fuels must happen soon to get back on track.

Surpassing the threshold in one year

doesn't mean the goal can't still be met. However, much more needs to be invested in research and development to meet the planet's growing energy needs and eliminate fossil fuels.

A first step toward real funding would be to halt all spending for the Pentagon, stop funding wars and genocide, end all U.S. weapons production, and end all U.S.-led military alliances that menace the world. Studies have shown that the annual spending for all of that is somewhere near \$2.5 trillion. There is another \$6.9 trillion – more than the GDP of all but two countries in the world – being held by non-banking U.S. firms.

All this money has been stolen from the labor of the worldwide working class. It's time to take it back and use it for the future of the planet and all of humanity. #

Louisiana Gov. Landry kidnaps unhoused people ahead of Super Bowl

By Louisiana Workers Council

\$16 million spent to intern unhoused people could give them all apartments

Jan. 15, New Orleans – Before daylight on January 15, Gov. Jeff Landry took the next step in taking over New Orleans. On Landry's commands, armed state police rounded up unhoused people who had been camping close to the French Quarter and the Superdome, which is hosting the profitable Super Bowl on Feb. 9. Personal items, IDs, medicine, medical and social service records were destroyed. At least 1 arrest was made.

Bypassing the city government, Landry bussed unhoused people to a "transitional" warehouse shelter that had been set up in an industrial area. The mainly Black residents of the nearby neighborhood were not informed or consulted at all. The shelter – which is surrounded by a barbed wire fence – had no heat, showers, beds, or eye-level windows. One unhoused hospitality worker called it an internment camp.

According to the NOHHARM collective, the governor gave a contract months ago to a company called Workforce Group to set up the so-called shelter. Workforce is owned by a private equity firm, Bernhard Capital Partners, a major donor to Landry's campaign funds. This cruel pre-dawn raid was done with less than 48 hours notice.

The warehouse is almost six miles from downtown and has no sidewalks. The nearest bus stop is a half-hour walk away, making it impossible for people to make their social service appointments, which sometimes take months to schedule. Meetings with agencies at the site will take place in tents. The temperature in New Orleans this week is dropping to 28 degrees Fahrenheit. Unhoused people with jobs at night would be shut out of their beds at 9:00 p.m.

The Super Bowl is an exclusive event, bringing billions in profits to New Orleans and national corporations. The city itself undertook 400 projects and, with the state, spent millions of taxpayer dollars in preparation. Meanwhile, a ticket is going for \$5,000 each. Luxury boxes (renovated with taxpayer money) are upwards of \$50,000.



Jan. 15, New Orleans – activists held a press conference outside City Hall, drawing a crowd of around 100 against Gov. Jeff Landry's pre-Super Bowl internment of unhoused people.

Photo: Louisiana Workers Council.

NOHHARM exposed that "not counting cost for the Louisiana State Police... the warehouse carries a price tag of \$11.4 million for two months or \$16.2 million for three months, about \$80,000 per each of the 200 beds. With \$16.2 million, 200 unhoused people could get six years of rental assistance for a studio." So why isn't that done? Because just like state prisons and immigrant prisons, there is a profit to be made by jailing people.

Landry wants to hide the massive cost-of-living crisis that has been forced on Louisianans by the government. The state, with almost no resistance from New Orleans officials, has refused to allow the city to vote for rent control, wages, or any meaningful measure to stop soaring rents. Year after year the Louisiana legislature has refused to raise the \$7.25 per hour minimum wage. The racist governor wants to push out working-class, predominantly Black residents in order to make New Orleans a playground for the rich.

Landry's pre-dawn raid is part of a larger campaign to criminalize poor people and undermine working-class solidarity in order to cut food stamps, Medicaid, and other basic social ser-

vices. The state has already cut thousands off of Medicaid and has reduced benefits for thousands more.

The state is creating more conditions of homelessness by giving insurance companies a free hand to raise insurance costs by three times or more, which raises rents and causes foreclosures. Every week, foreclosed properties are auctioned off to developers in New Orleans. The governor and state legislature are using the government as a transmission belt to funnel money away from us into the pockets of the capitalists.

We New Orleans workers have had a war declared on us by the billionaires. Thousands are a paycheck or rent payment away from homelessness. A third of children are in poverty and senior hunger is higher here than anywhere in the country. Rates of incarceration are among the highest in the world. We are not taken in by the governor, who is reducing taxes for the rich while maintaining the highest sales tax in the U.S., claiming this raid and kidnapping of unhoused people makes us safer.

We need to unite and fight to impose rent controls, raise wages, cut insurance rates, and protect and expand our SNAP and Medicaid benefits. #

Cuba will win in the face of the imperialist onslaught!

Statement by the Revolutionary Government

U.S. President Donald Trump has attacked Cuba from day one and without any pretext. The decision to reestablish the ironclad economic war measures against Cuba, which his predecessor eliminated only days before, is a demonstration of the aggressiveness of U.S. imperialism against the sovereignty, peace and well-being of the Cuban population. Among them is the inclusion of our country, once again, in the arbitrary list of States that supposedly sponsor terrorism, a designation that shows an absolute disregard for the truth.

This is not surprising. The statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on January 14 already warned: "The government of that country could reverse in the future the measures adopted today, as has happened on other occasions and as a sign of the lack of legitimacy, ethics, consistency and reason of its conduct against Cuba." He also said that "American politicians do not usually stop to find justification...". This is how the country is governed.

Trump has interpreted his coming to power as the coronation of an emperor. His ambition includes, just to start, the conquest of Canada, the usurpation of Greenland, the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico and the deprivation of the Panamanians of their canal. The hegemonic Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny, which were imposed by blood and fire in Latin America and the Caribbean, are the guide of the new government team.

He is associated with the groups and politicians who have made aggression against Cuba a way of life, have profited for decades from the anti-Cuban business and today share the intoxication of the new president. They all have a high responsibility in the difficult economic situation of the country and in the increase of the migratory flow from Cuba to the United States.

Trump is associated with the groups and politicians who have made aggression against Cuba a way of life, have profited for decades from the anti-Cuban business and today share the intoxication of the new president. They all have a high responsibility in the difficult economic situation of the country and in the increase of the migratory flow from Cuba to the United States.

This new act of aggression by the United States government against the Cuban people shows, once again, the true, cruel, merciless objective of these and so many other measures of siege and suffocation, which are applied against Cuba for the purpose of domination. It constitutes a reaction of impotence in the face of the inability to bend our will and in the face of the respect, sympathy and support that the Revolution arouses among the

peoples of the world.

The economic blockade, its reinforcement and the new aggressive measures will continue to weigh, with a very damaging effect, on our economy, the standard of living, the potential for development and the legitimate dreams of justice and well-being of the Cuban people, as has been the case in recent years.

They will not divert us from the socialist path, from the effort to recover the economy, from promoting the greatest solidarity, creativity, talent, spirit of work, and from defending as an impregnable bastion the freedom, independence, sovereignty and privilege of building a future without foreign interference.

The Cuban people are grateful for the many expressions of support and solidarity received from all over the world, from governments, Cubans living abroad, parliaments, political, religious and social organizations, and from political figures in the United States and other countries.

No one should be fooled. The Cuban people expressed themselves with clear determination and strength in the march on December 20th. Here the conviction prevails that CUBA WILL WIN!

**Homeland or death,
we will win!**

Havana, January 21, 2025



CONFEDERACIÓN SINDICAL
DE TRABAJADORES/AS DE
LAS AMÉRICAS



Frente a la arremetida imperialista, **CUBA VENCERÁ**

Declaración del Gobierno Revolucionario

Arremete el presidente estadounidense Donald Trump contra Cuba desde el primer día y sin ningún pretexto. La decisión de restablecer las férreas medidas de guerra económica contra Cuba, que su predecesor eliminó solo días antes, es demostración de la agresividad del imperialismo estadounidense contra la soberanía, la paz y el bienestar de la población cubana. Entre ellas está la inclusión de nuestro país, nuevamente, en la lista arbitraria de Estados que supuestamente patrocinan el terrorismo, designación que evidencia un desprecio absoluto a la verdad.

Esto no sorprende. La declaración del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores del 14 de enero ya advertía: «que el gobierno de ese país podría revertir en el futuro las medidas hoy adoptadas, como ha ocurrido en otras ocasiones y como muestra de la falta de legitimidad, ética, consistencia y razón de su conducta contra Cuba». También afirmó que «los políticos estadounidenses no suelen detenerse en encontrar justificación...». Así se gobierna en ese país.

Trump ha interpretado su llegada al poder como la coronación de un emperador. Su ambición abarca, solo para empezar, la conquista de Canadá, la usurpación de Groenlandia, el cambio de nombre del Golfo de México y el despojo

a los panameños de su canal. La hegemónica Doctrina Monroe y el Destino Manifiesto, que a golpe de sangre y fuego se impusieron en América Latina y el Caribe, son la guía del nuevo equipo de gobierno.

A él se asocian los grupos y políticos que han hecho de la agresión a Cuba un modo de vida, han lucrado durante décadas del negocio anticubano y comparten hoy la embriaguez del nuevo mandatario. Todos tienen una alta responsabilidad en la difícil situación económica del país y en el aumento del flujo migratorio de Cuba hacia los Estados Unidos.

Este nuevo acto de agresión del gobierno de Estados Unidos contra el pueblo cubano muestra, una vez más, el objetivo verdadero, cruel, despiadado de estas y tantas otras medidas de cerco y asfixia, que con fines de dominación se aplican contra Cuba. Constituye la reacción de impotencia frente a la incapacidad de doblegar nuestra voluntad y ante el respeto, simpatía y apoyo que concita la Revolución entre los pueblos del mundo.

El bloqueo económico, su reforzamiento y las nuevas medidas agresivas continuarán pesando, con efecto muy dañino, sobre nuestra economía, el nivel de vida, las potencialidades de

desarrollo y legítimos sueños de justicia y bienestar del pueblo cubano, como ha sido en los últimos años.

No nos van a desviar del rumbo socialista, del empeño en recuperar la economía, de fomentar la mayor solidaridad, creatividad, talento, espíritu de trabajo, y de defender como un bastión inexpugnable la libertad, la independencia, la soberanía y el privilegio de construir un futuro sin injerencia extranjera.

El pueblo de Cuba agradece las múltiples expresiones de respaldo y solidaridad recibidas de todas partes del mundo, de gobiernos, cubanos residentes en el exterior, parlamentos, organizaciones políticas, religiosas, sociales y de figuras políticas de Estados Unidos y de otros países.

Nadie debe llamarse a engaño. El pueblo cubano se expresó con clara determinación y fuerza en la marcha del pasado 20 de diciembre. Aquí prevalece la convicción de que Cuba vencerá.

¡Patria o Muerte, Venceremos!

La Habana, 21 de enero de 2025

STRUGGLE ★ **LA LUCHA**
for Socialism | *por el Socialismo*